The Black Cat

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December 1896.

The Lost Brook Trail.
Bert Leston Taylor.

A Modern De Pompadour.
Jennie Bullard Waterbury.

The Parchment Diary.
Willis B. Lloyd.

A Honeymoon Eclipse.
George C. Gardner.

The Captain's Last Cruise.
Stanley Edwards Johnson.

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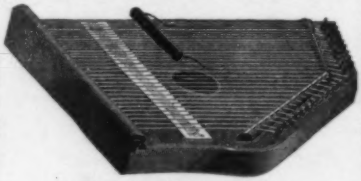

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The Black Cat

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The Lost Brook Trail.

BY BERT LESTON TAYLOR.

I WAS smoking an after-dinner pipe on the veranda of the one-too-many hotel at Errol, when I was accosted by a gentleman who had arrived the evening before on the stage from Colebrook.

"Is this Mr. Sam Gilkey?" he asked. I pleaded guilty.

"The landlord of this illustrious inn tells me that you are the best guide to be found in this part of the country," said he.

"Well, sir," I replied, "I have frequently noted in Mr. Bragg a passion for the exact truth that amounts almost to a disease."

"You don't talk like a guide," remarked my prospective employer, eyeing me curiously.

"That may be the fault of my education," said I, a little tartly. "Are you afraid it would interfere with my duties?"

"No; I guess I can stand it if you can," he observed, good-naturedly. "I'll tell you what I require," he went on, handing me a cigar. "First, a guide who knows thoroughly the country about here for fifteen or twenty miles; second, a man — same man — who will not make remarks upon my method of fishing; third, a man with grit enough to stand by me in any adventure that Providence may throw in my way."

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In reply I stated that I knew like a book the country between the New Hampshire line and the Rangeleys, and as far north as the Canadian border; that any method of fishing he might select would have my approval, if not the flattery of imitation; and that my fidelity to an employer had yet to be questioned.

"Consider yourself engaged," said he, and we shook hands on it.

Edward Atherton, Boston,— so the hotel register read,— was a man of about thirty years, of medium height, slender of build, with small, aristocratic-looking hands and feet, dark brown hair and eyes, and a face in which was mirrored a kindly disposition and a light heart; withal an expression of confidence and resolution, a suggestion of the "grit" he had asked for in me. He was unusually well dressed, though without a trace of flashiness.

Atherton informed me that his destination was Brown's Farm, ten miles up the Magalloway. As the log drive was not yet by, the little steamer that plied between Errol Dam and the Magalloway country was not in service. But my canoe was at the dam, and Atherton readily chose that method of locomotion in preference to the tedious drive over Errol hill.

During the trip up the Magalloway, Atherton proved the most delightful sportsman that had ever engaged my services. He was possessed of a fund of capital stories, all humorously and gracefully told. Thus the hours sped quickly by.

The lights of the few houses that comprise the settlement in Magalloway Plantation had been twinkling scarce five minutes when we swung around the last bend in our journey, and I beached the canoe at the foot of the slope on which stood the hotel.

"What! A piano in this wilderness!" cried Atherton.

I explained that there was a very good piano at the hotel. "That is probably Miss Vaughn playing," said I. "I brought her up from Errol yesterday."

"Egad, then, Miss Vaughn shall have an appreciative audience," said he. "Hand me that flask and those cigars in my fishing coat. Chopin, or I'm a sinner," he murmured, stretching himself in the canoe and lighting a cigar. "I'll swear that Chopin

himself could not have desired more poetic surroundings amid which to listen to his lovely creations."

I had never heard of Mr. Chopin and his creations, but I did find a peculiar sympathy between the music Miss Vaughn was making and the soft swish of the river around the bend, the miles of forest stretching away in the ghostly distance, and the giant peak across the narrow vale, whose wooded slopes the rising moon was lighting.

"Miss Vaughn plays well," said Atherton presently, "but there is no soul in her fingers. The only person that ever played that nocturne to my liking was a slip of a girl who, alone in a White Mountain hotel parlor, entertained me unconsciously, as Miss Vaughn is now doing. I saw her but once afterwards, kicking in a comic opera chorus under the name of Polly Edwards. I'll warrant that the 'tender grace of a day that is dead' has long since vanished from her piano fingers. By the way, who is this Miss Vaughn?"

"Bill Vaughn's girl. She spends her summers here. Lives in Boston, I believe, during the winter."

"Vaughn, I infer, is the big man of the plantation."

"Well, he's big enough," I laughed. "Stands six foot two in his hunting boots. He's a guide and trapper. Makes his headquarters here, but for excellent reasons spends most of his time in the woods."

"Ah?"

"The game-warden shot his deer dog last summer; he shot the warden."

"Sort of evened the thing up. And the authorities — had they nothing to say concerning the affair?"

"They said all they could. Bill was indicted, but never caught; he's a good shot. And you might as well hunt for a needle in a stack as try to run a man down in the Maine woods. Folks around here always give Bill a tip when the sheriff or any of his deputies are in the neighborhood. They don't like game wardens."

"Well, the concert is over, and we may as well hunt supper," remarked Atherton. We shouldered our traps and walked up the stretch to the hotel.

The next morning, at breakfast, Atherton was introduced to Miss Inez Vaughn, a tall, well-shaped, and handsome girl, for whom I had long entertained a warm admiration; a praiseworthy sentiment which she never took the trouble of returning. Atherton was apparently more in her line. Before the forenoon was gone they were the best of friends. She played about everything he asked for — a nocturne in this, a ballade in that, and a lot of other things that were Greek to me. When Miss Vaughn disappeared to dress for dinner — another compliment to my employer, as she was not in the habit of dazzling the natives with her toilettes — Atherton joined me in a smoke on the veranda.

"Samuel," said he, "your Miss Vaughn" — *my* Miss Vaughn — "is a very entertaining young lady, who has thoroughly captivated me by her charms."

As I had not heard him speak ten consecutive words seriously, I accepted his enthusiasm for what it was worth. "Yes," he went on, "she is good looking, she is bright, and decidedly intelligent, and her music alone entitles her to a degree from the University of Culture. But she is no more a part of these rustic environments than I am, and I regard it as strange that a young woman of her tastes and accomplishments should elect to bury herself for any considerable time in a wilderness that borders on the howling."

I suggested that a natural interest in her father might lead a daughter to pass a few months each year in his neighborhood, and Atherton let it go at that. "Far be it from me to complain," said he. "Thanks to Miss Vaughn's geographical position, I expect to pass a very pleasant vacation."

"But I understood that you came up here to fish."

"And you also understood," he retorted, "that there was to be no comment on my method of fishing."

"Very good, sir," I smiled. "You are not going out to-day?"

"I am going out driving. You can fish if you want."

After dinner I strung my line and started off to see how the trout were biting. As I left the hotel, Atherton was handing Miss Vaughn into a carriage. After the rebuke I had received, good-natured though it was, I concluded to let Atherton find out for himself that he had a rival for the smiles of Miss Vaughn in

Mr. Jack Carruthers, of Boston, whose appearance each summer at the farm usually followed closely upon Miss Vaughn's arrival. I surmised that he would put in an appearance before the week was out, and when I came up from the river at sundown I was not surprised to find him on the hotel veranda, talking with Bill Vaughn.

Vaughn was a splendid specimen of physical manhood, straight as a pine, despite his more than fifty years. His gait was lumbering, but it was the awkwardness of immense strength, which showed in every movement of his huge frame. He was a taciturn man, and although I had summered and wintered with him, as the saying is, I never got very close to him. Since the game warden episode I had seen very little of him.

Carruthers I never fancied, although I had piloted him on more than one fishing trip, and he had given me no specific cause for dislike. He was a handsome, reckless sort of chap, who greeted folks cordially, and spent money freely, and I was probably the only person in the Plantation who did not express an unreserved liking for him. Possibly the favor with which Miss Vaughn regarded him may have had something to do with my prejudice, but that explanation would not cover my strong liking for Atherton.

The latter drove in about dusk, and Miss Vaughn presented him to her father and Carruthers. The newcomer extended his hand graciously, and then dropped it with the exclamation, "Hello! Haven't we met before?"

"I fancy not. I have no recollection of the pleasure," replied Atherton.

"Gad, you'd remember the meeting if you were the chap I took you for," said Carruthers. As he turned away I noticed a peculiar smile on Atherton's face.

"Come up to my room after supper," my employer remarked to me; "I have some work for you."

The "work" proved to be the manufacture of a detail map of "Magalloway Plantation, State of Maine."

I had an old map of the Plantation. This we enlarged to a scale of about one mile to an inch, and at Atherton's suggestion I indicated every brook and its most insignificant tributary within

a radius of a dozen miles, together with the ranges of hills, timber land, roads, and trails.

It was well into the morning ere the map was completed, and we breakfasted late. Carruthers and Miss Vaughn had gone away for the day; drove off toward Upton, landlord White said, in response to Atherton's casual inquiry. "That being the case, Samuel," my employer remarked to me, "we will follow the advise of one Walton, and go a-fishing."

An hour later found us on the Diamond River, at "the Rips," a mile and a half of swift water without a pool. Although I announced that here was the best fishing for a dozen miles about, Atherton left me with the remark, "Fish, then, and be happy," and went up stream.

I followed leisurely, zigzaging in long reaches across the river because of the current. It was too bright for good fishing, but when I reached the head of the Rips I was satisfied with my catch, and here I made a discovery that caused me to reel up my line and go in quest of Atherton. Away up on the Diamond, in a wild gorge through which the river is a roaring, foam-flecked torrent, I found him, perched on a monster boulder, drawing lazily on his pipe and examining the map we had made the night before. "Any luck?" I sang out.

"Not a rise. Guess all the fish are below."

"Perhaps you'd have better success if you took your bait box," I remarked, passing it over.

"Hello! Did I leave that behind?" he asked, in some surprise. "I hadn't missed it. We'll try the Dead Diamond tomorrow."

But he didn't; for the next morning Carruthers was absent, and Miss Vaughn informed Atherton that he had gone away for several days on business. "Then," remarked my patron, with a dazzling smile, "I suppose we may resume our studies in Chopin."

During the next few days, there being no call for my services, I had nothing to do but wonder what sort of a game Atherton was playing; whether he was simply amusing himself with Miss Vaughn, or whether his "intentions" were serious. If the former, I told myself that I would call him to account the

moment he ceased to be my employer. My regard for the young lady was as warm as it was unsuspected.

My worldly experience had not been large. Certainly I never saw a man make love so rapidly, so dashingly, and irresistibly as Atherton; and I was merely a spectator at long range. There were rambles in the woods and fields in the forenoon, drives in the afternoon, and *tête-à-têtes* in the remotest corner of the veranda when the moon silvered the drifting logs on the Magalloway. When the pair were about the hotel the piano was going nearly all the time, and sometimes Atherton sang in a fine tenor voice, and, it seemed to me, with rare skill, songs that breathed of passion and romance, and which, from the brief but eloquent silence that usually followed them, must have had the desired effect. Coming around the corner of the house one evening, I overheard the following fragment of conversation: "No, Ned, dear; Dad would kill me if he knew I even hinted at it. For all he looks so good-natured, he is the most violent man in the world. There, don't rumple my hair. Mrs. White has the chief failing of her sex in an aggravated form, and if" — At this point I beat an honorable retreat, with the reflection that Carruthers had better stay at home and look after his fences before they were all down.

Atherton spoke no more to me of Miss Vaughn. Once, when I complimented him jokingly upon his skill as a heartbreaker, he answered, with pretended solemnity, "Samuel, I am heaving an anchor to windward," a remark which I gave up attempting to fathom after pondering over it the better part of the day.

On the fourth day Carruthers returned. Somewhat to my surprise, Atherton did not contest with him the possession of Miss Vaughn's society, but resumed his fishing excursions. Yet he fished little or none. Toward sundown I usually found him at the head of the brook, dozing on the bank, or so engrossed with his thoughts that he did not notice my approach. This continued for the rest of the week.

Monday morning I rose very early, as was my habit, and as I was feeling in unusually good spirits, I took a long stroll up what is known as the Black Brook road, a corduroy affair formerly used for lumbering purposes. On my return I digressed into the woods

to follow what looked to be but failed to prove a deer track, and when I returned to the road I heard the sound of carriage wheels. A buckboard had passed, and as it disappeared around a twist in the road I was certain that the travelers were Carruthers and Miss Vaughn. I was more certain, if possible, when, on returning to the hotel, I learned that they had driven away shortly before. I mentioned the circumstance to Atherton, and he seemed pleased for no apparent reason.

Carruthers and Miss Vaughn did not return that night. I had an explanation handy, but as it was not asked for, I kept it to myself. On the following morning Atherton observed to me: "I believe that there is only one more brook on our map to fish."

"Yes; Black Brook."

"We'll fish that to-day."

A ten-mile drive brought us to our destination, a dismantled lumber works, deserted these many years. In the shed attached to the cabin we discovered a buckboard; the horse that had drawn it was doubtless in a neighboring bit of pasturage. Atherton made no comment, nor did I.

After caring for our horse and eating a lunch, we jointed our rods and got on the brook. Atherton for once did not hurry away, but fished ahead, never more than a few rods away. He fished carelessly, however, as if his eyes and mind were bent on something besides his rod and line.

To avoid a pool that defied our wading boots, we clambered up the right bank and struck the old lumber trail, now so grown over that it was the blindest of paths. We had gone but a few yards when I heard an exclamation from Atherton, and when I came up to him, he was on his knees, examining a mud-hole in the path, caused by a spring that gushed from a little ledge at the right. On the farther side of the bog was a single bootprint, so deep in the mud, however, that the size of the foot could only be guessed at.

"This would seem to indicate," remarked Atherton, glancing up at me, "that some one had passed this way since the snow went off."

"And this," I added, showing him the disturbed bushes at the left, "would seem to indicate that some other fisherman had taken the trouble to go round."

"Well reasoned, Samuel," he smiled. "Fishermen usually go out of their way to avoid a few inches of mud. Never mind the brook, but follow me."

The exhibition of woodcraft that Atherton now displayed astonished me. Half a dozen times the trail led off onto the mountain, and more than once, after clambering over a giant windfall, my eyes, trained by long experience, would have been bothered for a few minutes to discover the elusive track. But I had only to follow Atherton. He was never at fault.

Suddenly the trail ran off into the brook, and there, apparently, was an end of it. Atherton noted with evident satisfaction vague bootprints on the bit of pebbly beach made by the receding waters. They led straight to the bed of the stream, and vanished in the swift water.

Atherton beat the bushes on the opposite bank, but found not a vestige of a trail. For fifty feet each way the brush was practicably impenetrable. He tried the right bank, beyond where the trail had come down, with a like result. Then he lighted his pipe, threaded a worm on his hook, and moved slowly up the brook, casting occasionally, and I noticed that his gaze was exploring every foot of the banks.

A bend in the brook brought us to as lovely a spot as it has ever been my pleasure to look upon. To our right the mountain around which the stream wound straightened up for a height of two hundred feet, the top of the precipice being surmounted by a mass of jagged, naked rock that hung, grim and threatening, over the gorge. Before us a cataract of wondrous beauty flung itself from a shelf thirty feet overhead, and plunged into a dark and frowning pool. To our left was the forest, rising, tree upon tree, to the brink of the cascade.

Atherton stopped short, with an emphatic, "Well, I'm damned!" I supposed he was impressed with the majesty of Nature's picture, but he had not given it a thought.

"This black pool, which only a giant could wade, is the logical termination of the trail," he murmured. Mindful of my pledge to refrain from comment on his method of fishing, I kept silence.

"Wait for me a few minutes," he requested, swinging his basket from his shoulder. From the basket, in which there was

not a fish, he took a pair of field-glasses and a pair of lineman's spurs. He slung the glasses around his neck, fastened the spurs to his heels, and, skirting the pool, began the tedious and perilous ascent of the cliff down which the cataract tumbled. What the deuce did he want the spurs for, I wondered. I soon saw. After reaching the top of the ledge he took a brief rest, and then began to move up the trunk of a lone pine that dominated the gorge. He had been gone nearly half an hour, when the rattling of loose stones told me that Atherton was descending. I watched him silently as he let himself down the cliff and regained my side, and then my curiosity slopped over.

"Mr. Atherton," said I, "if you will raise the embargo on my tongue for a few seconds, it will afford me a large measure of satisfaction to remark that you are the damnedest fisherman I ever knew."

"Certainly, my boy," was his imperturbable response; "and let me say, in return, that you are the damnedest map-maker I ever employed."

"Ah?" I remarked questioningly, not having an idea what he was driving at.

"Look," said he, taking the map from his pocket and spreading it on a rock. "Here is Black Brook, and here you have indicated this cascade, with the mountain on the right. On the left you have marked, 'High plateau. Heavy timber land, owned by Berlin Lumber Company and untouched for fifty years.' From the spot where we stand, to the old lumber works where we struck in on the brook, you have not indicated a single tributary."

"There is none."

"Pardon me; there must be. Near the top of that pine I found a coign of vantage from which an unobstructed view was to be had, and I leveled my field-glasses over the sea of tree-tops that stretches away to the northeast, unbroken, as far as I could see, by a single clearing — the great woods of Maine. But that there *is* a clearing I have reason to believe. My glasses caught far up the valley — for there *is* a valley, in spite of your map — a slender column of smoke, almost lost in the haze of the atmosphere."

"And what do you conclude?" I asked, as he paused.

"That where there is a valley in this country there is a brook,

and that brook, my study of the country convinces me, must join Black Brook between here and the old lumber works."

"I believe you're right," I burst out suddenly, after racking my brains for several minutes. "I remember my father speaking of a brook that came down from the north and joined Black Brook below the falls. But it has been lost these five years. My acquaintance with Black Brook dates back as far as that, and during that period, in the score of times I have fished through here, I recall no such tributary."

"Nevertheless, I believe there is one, and that we need not look for it below the spot where the lumber trail ran off into the brook."

We retraced our steps slowly, Atherton keeping up a pretense of fishing. Suddenly he stopped, and held up one hand. "Listen!" he cried.

The brook at this point was broad and comparatively tranquil, and above the gentle swish of the current I heard the gurgle of swifter water.

Atherton pointed a convincing finger at an object on the north bank, which had not attracted his serious attention when he passed up the stream. It was the heap of dead boughs familiar to fishermen who have toiled up streams by which has rung the woodsman's ax. This particular brush heap was fully a dozen feet high. About midway of it a huge birch bough, which had been half torn from its parent trunk, hung down into the stream. "Wait a minute," smiled Atherton, as I started forward; "I want to make this exposé as dramatic as possible."

He pulled himself up the bank and plunged into the bushes, where I heard him thrashing about. A suspicion of what I was later to know was flitting through my brain.

"Nature has been cleverly improved upon," Atherton reported. "For fully fifty feet into the wood a man could scarcely cut his way past this spot with an ax. And now, Samuel," he cried, drawing aside the birchen bough, "behold the opening of the Lost Brook Trail!"

We peered into the aperture thus made, and saw the outlet of a good-sized brook.

Atherton dropped the bough, threw himself on the bank, and

motioned me to a seat at his side. "Sam, my boy," said he, in such a grave voice that I looked up in surprise, "although I have your promise — given, perhaps, as you may have thought it was asked, lightly — to stand by me in any adventure that might present itself, you are at liberty now, if you so desire, to return to the hotel and leave me to finish the work I have begun. Yonder," pointing to the northeast, "lies danger."

"Mr. Atherton," I replied, after a few moments of thought, "to redeem the pledge I gave you, I only desire your assurance that the enterprise on which you are engaged is an honest one."

"That you may have freely. I do not care to say more until I am assured that I am not off my reckoning. But, if I have correctly sized up the situation, I have desperate men to deal with, and it may be dangerous for you to be found in my company. I do not ask for your active support unless an emergency should require it. What do you say now?"

For answer I extended my hand, which he gripped without other comment.

"Three o'clock," said Atherton, glancing at his watch and rising. "We will leave our rods and baskets here. You have a revolver?" I nodded. "You may need it; and now," — as he lifted the bough that screened the mouth of the new-found brook, — "leave faint-heartedness behind, all ye who enter here!"

For a few feet we had to almost wallow in the bed of the brook, but as we advanced, the aqueduct of boughs, as Atherton happily characterized it, enlarged sufficiently to afford a comparatively clear passage. So cunningly had nature been utilized that a fisherman blundering into the place would not have given its formation a second thought. On each side small trees had been felled, boughs interlaced, and old logs carelessly piled, so that for fifty yards or more the brook and the valley through which it coursed were effectually concealed, as travel past the outlet was possible only in the bed of Black Brook or along its south bank.

The aqueduct gradually expanded until we found ourselves in the woods, beside as handsome a trout brook as the wilderness holds. As it had been a "close" stream for a number of years, I promised myself excellent fishing at some future time.

For half a mile or more our only route was the brook, but search

for a trail was finally rewarded, and our subsequent progress became as rapid as was consistent with the prudence exercised by Atherton.

"Softly, my boy," he called back to me. "One could hear you coming a mile off."

"I am not an Indian," I replied, and at that moment I made a break that would have disgraced a tenderfoot. I caught my boot on a snag and fell headlong.

Atherton laughed. "You may be able to track a deer," said he, "but you'd never do to run down moonshiners. Slow up here," he added, before I had opportunity to reply. "I'm going ahead." With that he glided away as noiselessly as a snake.

For two hours I tramped over the vilest of trails, clambering over fallen trees that crumbled into dust beneath my weight, and toiling through swamps into which I sank to my knees. In spite of Atherton's caution, I had traveled at a rapid pace, which finally told on me, and I threw myself down beside a spring to rest.

As I resumed my tramp, I came upon a bit of paper fluttering from a raspberry bush. It was a message, and I comprehended its half dozen words in some perturbation: "*Turn to the right. Lay low.*"

A partial explanation of this message was shortly presented by the forking of the trail. The main track kept along and across the brook, while a second path led up the hill. I should not have detected this path had not a tall bush which screened it been bent down.

The sun was declining, and twilight comes swiftly in the forest. I had not proceeded far when I saw through the brush the dispersion of shadow which betokened a clearing, and toward this I crawled on my hands and knees.

The tension on my nerves was increased by the sight of a log shanty on the farther side of the clearing. No smoke issued from the blackened chimney, and the place appeared deserted. There was an entrance midway of the shanty, and on each side a sashless window. In the center of the clearing the remains of a brush fire smoldered.

As I peered forth upon this scene the bushes to the left were parted, and Bill Vaughn stepped into the open. As he walked

slowly toward the entrance to the shanty he glanced in at the window. He started back, wheeled, and bounded noiselessly to a small shed, from which he emerged with a double-barreled shotgun. He again walked to the window, and I heard his voice, low and stern: "Come out of there!"

As he stepped back and threw the shotgun across his arm, Atherton stood in the doorway. I never witnessed such magnificent nerve as the latter displayed. There was not a tremor in his voice as, flipping the ash from his cigar, he remarked nonchalantly, "Hello, Vaughn! Why this warlike demonstration?"

An expression of frightful ferocity came into Vaughn's face. "What in hell are you doing here?" he demanded, in a voice husky with passion.

The reply came like a shot. "I was looking for you."

"What!" roared the outlaw, and I heard the hammers of his gun go back. I had drawn and cocked my revolver, and it was pointed toward Vaughn's bulky frame, but my hand shook so that if I had pressed the trigger the result would not likely have been fatal.

"Yes," continued Atherton, calmly, elevating his chin and blowing a cloud of smoke skyward; "I thought it might interest you to know that the sheriff and a couple of deputies were on your track."

"He lies!" shouted another voice, and I saw Carruthers, followed by Miss Vaughn, step into the clearing. "He's a damned spy, Bill," went on Carruthers, walking up to Atherton and staring into his face. "I thought I knew you, and now I'm certain of it. You're the chap who put a ball through me in Bridgeport five years ago."

"Under the circumstances, I am sorry I did not aim better," said Atherton, with an exasperating smile.

"You'll be sorrier before long," sneered the other. "Keep him covered a moment, Bill, and I'll truss him up."

Carruthers went into the shanty, and reappeared with a coil of rope, at one end of which he fashioned a running noose. This he threw around Atherton's shoulders, and dragged him ungently to the pine tree by which I was lying, scarce daring to breathe.

When the trussing operation was completed Carruthers walked

away, and I thought it a seasonable time to let my employer know that the pledge I had given him was in good working order. I reached forth a cautious hand and gave the calf of his leg a reassuring squeeze.

"Blücher's battalions!" I heard him murmur, and he called out cheerfully to his captors: "Well, gentlemen, how long am I to be tied up here?"

"You'll find out soon enough," flung back Carruthers. "Polly, put the kettle on," — to Miss Vaughn.

That young woman, from the moment of her appearance on the scene, had remained a silent witness of the dramatic affair, and I had well-nigh forgotten her existence. As she moved toward the shanty, in obedience to Carruthers's careless order, she threw upon Atherton an expressive glance in which I saw the "anchor to windward" which Atherton had cast on the moonlit veranda at Brown's Farm. Help would have been forthcoming from that quarter, I felt assured.

"For God's sake, Sam," whispered Atherton, "cut this rope. These cursed mosquitoes are eating me alive."

"All right," I replied; "but don't make a move until I get that gun."

"Good boy!" he muttered, comprehending my plan, which was to work my way around the clearing and capture the shotgun that Vaughn had stood against the end of the shanty.

"What's all that?" called out Carruthers sharply, pausing in the act of throwing an armful of brush upon the smoldering fire.

"I was merely remarking," returned Atherton mildly, "that the mosquitoes were devilish thick."

Carruthers chuckled. "You ought to thank your stars that the black fly season has gone by," said he.

I drew my fishing knife, and with infinite caution cut through Atherton's bonds until they hung by a thread; then I dropped on my stomach and crawled away in the brush. The crackling of the fire drowned the slight rustle that accompanied my progress. Vaughn and Carruthers sprawled on the ground beside the fire, smoking and conversing in low tones. "Polly," her skirts tucked up in picturesque fashion, had "put the kettle on," and it was singing merrily over the flames.

I reached the desired point at last, and I was not a moment too soon. Goaded to desperation by the assaults of the mosquitoes, Atherton had raised a hand to brush them from his tortured face, and Carruthers's watchful eye had caught the movement. The latter sprang up and started toward the tree.

I saw Atherton drop his hand behind him, and an instant later his arm straightened. "Stop!" he cried. With an oath Carruthers leaped forward. There was a flash and he went down like a log.

With a bellow of rage Vaughn turned for his gun. But it was in my hands, and pointed at his heart. "Sam Gilkey!" he cried in astonishment, and the reproach in his voice staggered me a bit.

"I don't know as much about this affair as you do, Bill," said I, "but you'll oblige me by throwing up your hands. This gun may go off."

Slowly his hands went up, and came down with a jerk. Atherton had slipped up behind him and pinioned him with the rope that lately bound his own form. "Blow his head off, Sam, if he moves," said Atherton, twisting the cords about the giant's arms and legs.

After Vaughn had been rendered null and void, I walked to where Carruthers lay, face down, and turned him over. "He's dead!" I reported, and turned away horror stricken.

"He will not remark again on my shooting ability," said Atherton coolly. "Keep Vaughn covered, Sam. He's a muscular devil, and that rope is none too strong. And now, Polly Edwards," — taking a fish-line from his pocket and advancing to Miss Vaughn, who, when the shot was fired, had rushed from the shanty and stood transfixed with terror, — "your hands, if you please."

"Ned!"

I shall never forget that cry. It pierced my heart like a knife blade. If Atherton was affected, there was no evidence of it in his quiet rejoinder: "I regret, Polly, that my duty rises superior to my natural sentiments."

"Who are you?" panted the girl, as Atherton wound the line gently about her arms.

"Edward Marlowe, United States secret service, at *your* service," he replied. "Gad! I gave her credit for more nerve," he added

quickly, as he caught the fainting girl in his arms. "Get some water, Sam. I'll look after Vaughn."

I was dazed and hot all over. I felt a bitter and unreasoning resentment toward Atherton, which was intensified as I watched him laving the unconscious girl's temples, with the tenderness of a lover. Vaughn hardly needed watching. He sat by the fire, his head sunk upon his breast.

Atherton bore Polly — for such it seemed was her name — to a near-by bank of greensward, and, taking off his coat, he rolled it up and placed it beneath her head. "Feel all right now?" he asked, as she opened her eyes. She turned her head away.

Atherton lit a cigar with a brand from the fire, and turned to me. "Sam, my boy," said he, "that gentleman who is growing cold over yonder was one of the most dangerous counterfeiters that ever operated in the East. Five years ago he was in the green goods business, and I helped to arrest him in Bridgeport. This fellow" — with a gesture toward Vaughn, who never raised his head — "is entitled to more consideration; he was led into it through his daughter, though I imagine the State will want him for that game-warden affair. Polly, here, 'shoved the queer.' In that shanty you will find a complete lay-out for the free coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to nothing."

I had nothing to say. A sob from Polly broke the silence.

"Sam," said Atherton, "see if you can find a lantern or two in that shanty. We shall have a devil of a time getting out of here."

A Modern De Pompadour.

BY JENNIE BULLARD WATERBURY.

IT was the night of the Mid-Lent Ball at the Opera, and Victor was in his element. He stood with pincushiony legs wide apart, his fat little stomach, Punch-like, hanging down between, and his shrewd little head cocked on one side like a wise canary.

Pierre was bustling about, preparing hot *peignoirs*, sending off boxes containing miraculous wigs in every style known and unknown to the modern coiffure; and all the gas jets were aflame, and the little stove was throwing out heat enough for a shop twice the size. There was an odor of expectancy in the air.

"She'll arrive," stated Victor, "at eleven o'clock less the quarter. That is the hour she always arrives. She will drive up in a coupé, and the maid will enter like a whirlwind and ask if everything is ready; and then she will fly back to the coupé, and assist Madame to descend; and Madame will enter slowly, done up in furs and chiffon, scented with my latest perfume, odoriferous of *violettes de Parme*. She will seat herself in that chair," pointing to a fauteuil in front of the largest mirror, "and there she will consult with me as to the latest creation. You know I live the whole year but for this moment. The moment when I reveal to my best client the result of my labors, the sum total of my genius for invention, invention of a novel scent, or a chic coiffure, seizure of a fad out of which to assume my opportunity. Do you remember," and here Victor threw back his chin, which years had creased into a chubby apology of its original dimpled contour, into a little fat pocket of flesh, which meant nothing so much as a surplus of adipose tissue, "do you remember the year when the Empress grew weary of Worth, and sent him back his latest creation, fashioned from the depths of his tortured nerves

to suit her whims? how she returned the whole costume and all its appurtenances in a carton, snipped to pieces with Her Majesty's scissors? That day — shall I ever forget it? — I designed a coiffure about which the whole of Paris was talking in a week; a coiffure *à l'Imperatrice*. It was made of little pieces of ribbon, and flowers, and a pouf of brocade, and a feather, and a pompon; and out from under it looked the Empress' Titian-colored hair, and almond-shaped eyes, and beautiful lips. It takes real genius thus to seize the talk of the town and apply it to one's art."

"Humph," returned Pierre, who was setting out the alcohol lamp, and giving a whiff, with a new evaporation of *violettes de Parme* to the already overcharged air, and polishing the handles of the curling tongs with the end of his alpaca coat tail, "humph, I remember how one of the Empress' lackeys came here in post haste, and signified in a rage that if you did not withdraw your 'nefarious invention' you would be clapped into *La Roquette* before nightfall."

"Softly, softly," retorted Victor, with a roguish twinkle in his eyes, and a nest of wrinkles running off into his hair along by the temples, as his whole physiognomy beamed with self-satisfaction. "Tut, tut, merely talk. Why, I advertised Her Majesty's whims, and I augmented Worth's fame, and I put thirty thousand francs in my pocket. I should have been unwise indeed to desire more.

"Madame?"

His radiant visage had suddenly altered from fatuous self-consciousness to obsequious interrogation. The bell of his door had rung violently, and a discreet-looking maid stood in the little doorway of the shop.

"Ready?" she demanded briefly.

"At Madame's orders."

"Shall we be alone? She particularly demands to-night that we shall be undisturbed for an hour."

"At Madame's service."

Victor was bowing almost to the ground. Pierre likewise. The maid vanished, to reappear almost instantly with a bundle of fur and lace, which leaned wearily upon her arm.

When the bundle arrived at the fauteuil which was drawn up in

front of the mirror under the light of the flaring gas, the figure revealed itself as a woman of about thirty-five years of age, with a pale, beautiful face, and dressed in the height of a fashion peculiarly her own. She was, without doubt, an individuality. Mistress, to a supreme degree, of that air of being somebody, which is so often sought for and so seldom attained.

"Well," she said, preparing to loosen the strings of her hood. She wore a puff of pink silk on her head, with a fall of lace almost covering her face, and a bunch of lace and violets gathering its fulness into a puffing in front, and again in the back of the neck. "What do you propose for me to-night, *mon ami?*"

Victor puffed. He commenced to remove his towels from the heater where they had been lying, and to pull out the drawers of the table at which his client was seated. His face was beaming with good nature and gratified pride. His little fat hands began to gesticulate violently.

"If Madame will leave to me the entire arrangement," he begged, almost in a whisper, "I will promise to outdo any costume at to-night's ball."

"I place myself at your disposition."

"Entirely?"

"Entirely."

"I promise," cried Victor, "to conquer in this night not only my adversaries, but my followers in future generations. With such a gift as Madame's confidence, as Madame's elegance, as Madame's beauty, with which to frame my talent, I am a man inspired. I feel within me a pulse so big, a soul so earnest, that my art seems more a religion than an art. A religion which acknowledges me as its prophet."

He loosened his client's hood, hung it up on a peg on the wall, divested her of her long cloak of cream-colored satin lined with ermine, and stood before her in an ecstasy of contemplation.

The woman sat listening to him silently. A little half smile lurked in her eyes and about her painted lips. She sat reposefully, waiting expectantly, amused, right royally amused. All her weariness had fallen from her with her outdoor garments. She was evidently studying Victor delightedly, and acknowledged him, in her heart, something worth looking at.

"What do you propose?"

"You must go to the ball to-night as *De Pompadour*."

"Costume Louis XV?"

"The same."

"Why '*De Pompadour*'?"

"Ah, there is where my art is so different from the art of my rivals. That is the why and wherefore you will be famous to-morrow. Know, then, Madame, that an illustrious journalist is tearing down, in a record of the empire, our preconceived theories as to *De Pompadour*. He claims she was not beautiful, — in sum, he claims for her everything which is ugly. We Parisians, we love the beautiful. It is our god, in women, in art, in emotion. We claim the right to hold on to it. *I* claim that right."

Victor's figure swelled fit to burst. He drew a dingy pocket-handkerchief from the pocket of his velvet coat, and wiped his eyes. They were swimming in tears.

"I can say nothing, Madame, to this famous man who has earned the right to say his say through his newspapers, and has chosen to send the beautiful *De Pompadour* down to posterity as a monster. I can say nothing. I can write nothing. Who would listen to the protest of a *coiffeur?* I can only read, and wring my hands at the desecration of a woman like you, who lent to her century, as you have to yours, her grace and charm to the unveiling of truth. My protest, therefore, shall be silent, but none the less forcible. You shall be my protest. You shall bid the cavillers at past imperial glories bow down before the grace of a day that is dead, a day when women considered the poor *coiffeur* their saving means of grace. *De Pompadour*, Madame, was one of these. You shall be my exponent after her."

He stopped, exhausted. He mopped his face. Its pores were exuding great drops of perspiration.

"But, with all my heart. But you are admirable, *mon petit* Victor. But you plead for your cause like a general pleading for his army. I am yours. Make me *De Pompadour*. Beautiful, young, adored. We will play into one another's hands, if you will. What an artist you are, but what an artist! If you could only have lived in the time of the Louis, you would have been esteemed at your just valuation. Begin."

Victor quickly unknotted her mass of magnificent hair, and brushed it scientifically, while forth from his lips poured a rushing river of his hopes, and fears, and past doings, and present hopings.

"It is not all for art," he confessed, a little shamefacedly, "but for fame. I am growing old. Oh, Madame knows it," as his client made a little rebellious movement with her head. "My day threatens to pass. I must make my best effort to-night to brush away the dust of ages, by piling up the flowers of memory. For a powerful rival stands in my way. A woman, in my profession! If Madame will believe it, she has installed herself on the Boulevard Haussmann, just around the corner, and there, in a shop ten times as big as mine, she emulates me. She places in her window heads of as marvelous a construction as mine. She is rapidly absorbing my clientele, who have tired of my small quarters and think me out of date. But there is only one 'Victor.'"

There was an indistinct murmur from his client, which signified she was endeavoring to answer from under her mass of hair, "But how could there be two such?"

Victor stopped just long enough to pretend to deny the soft impeachment, and then continued more and more animatedly. "Will you believe," he said vivaciously, "that she said to a friend of mine, she was guilty of confessing to a friend of mine, that she wished to 'steal my methods as well as my arts'? Can one imagine any greater or more profound perfidy?"

"It would be difficult," — from under the masses of hair.

Then, as he rolled it off her face, she looked straight at him in the glass ahead of her, and he caught the reflection of her eyes, as his practised hand prepared to construct her coiffure after an old print *à la* Louis XV.

"What is her name?"

"Stephanie. She calls herself 'Stephanie.'"

"Do you know her?"

"I have never seen her."

"Ah, my poor Victor!"

There was a long pause. The lovely client was divested of her dress, and laced up in a brocade as emulative of past grandeurs as the wonderful construction of flowers and feathers on her head.

She was a radiant vision. Three little black patches set off the dazzling whiteness of her skin. There was even a tiny patch between the creamy fairness of her dimpled shoulders. There were mitts for her dainty hands, sparkling with magnificent rings.

And, when finished, she was the exact image of *De Pompadour* the enchantress, *De Pompadour* the young, *De Pompadour* the all-powerful, who gained political distinction through personal charm, and made a slave of a man and a tool of her king.

Over this enchanting vision was finally fastened a *loup*,— one of those tiny masks which hide the nose and forehead. A rich fall of lace covered the cleft chin. In one corner, over the temple, was embroidered a monogram.

A final spray of *violettes de Parme à la Victor* was added from the evaporator. as a finishing touch, and assuming the aforesaid hood and the white satin cloak, the new *De Pompadour* called for her maid.

"*Bon soir*, Madame. The greatest success will be yours. Vouchsafe to me but a word to tell me of your triumphs. Your triumphs will be mine."

"Why not witness it, since you are a party to it?" came from behind the mask. "Don one of your dominoes, of which you provide so many for your clients, and come to the Opera, and witness me take the prize."

Victor hesitated. "The heat," he said, "and then the crowd; I should be unable to find Madame."

"As you will." The door closed, and she was gone.

"Quick!" cried Victor to Pierre, "quick! my domino. I will discover my client's identity to-night, or die in the attempt."

. . . . . .

The façade of the Opera House was lit up brilliantly with fringes of light. Three mounted policemen stood guard. The *Rue Halèvy* was a congested river of cabs and private carriages. The boulevards were light and bright as electricity could make them, and a pushing crowd, costumed and uncostumed, dominoed and masked, bewhiskered and befrilled, surged up and down the steps of the National Academy of Music, turned this night into a Palace of Pleasure where all who paid, or danced, or jollified, might read, enjoy, and digest.

As Victor scrambled up the steps as fast as his fat legs could carry him, the band of the Republican Guard, stationed at the first marble balcony to the right of the marble staircase, burst forth with the intoxicating syncopated measure of the "Habenera." Dominoes pink, and blue, and green, and yellow, and orange, swung in a whirl of kaleidoscopic color across the polished floor of the foyer, around into the buffet, and up and down the staircase, which threw out into greater prominence from its background of purity and immaculate perfection of outline and substance, the lilting, tilting throng, who, intoxicated with themselves and each other, tossed and heaved, in a billow of light, under the dazzling rays of the electric light.

In the ball-room a gigantic May-pole was erected, and hundreds of men and women, attired as shepherds and shepherdesses, tied and untied, and twisted in and out, above and under, the tri-colored ribbons which hung from the top of the pole. A Queen of the May, who bore the trace of more winters than summers, reclined in a chair fashioned like a big primrose, and daffy-down-dillys danced about her in hundreds, and lilies-of-the-valley stood bunched as her maids of honor.

The air was used up and stifling. Victor searched the entire building before he discovered his "creation." She stood behind a pillar in the vestibule, chatting with a number of masks.

The *De Pompadour* costume was a great success. Victor heard praises bestowed upon it right and left until his overcharged heart was fit to burst. The satire it contained, the seizure of the topic of the hour upon which to embroider his, Victor's, identity, however, was not remarked as universally or as conspicuously as Victor desired. He determined to make it even more marked, by a ruse.

Three masks stood under a bunch of lights pink-globed and casting about that corner of the corridor a rosy hue. Victor addressed them. "Hullo, my comrades. That *De Pompadour* yonder. Would you know the why and the wherefore of her costume?"

His voice was so gay, so noisy, so full of an audacious design to commit the crime of a revelation, that the maskers turned towards him as one man, and eagerly demanded its continuance.

They moved in his direction, and in an instant he was surrounded. A danseuse, clad as a black butterfly, leaned her elbow

on his shoulder, and tapping his chin daringly, bade him continue. A Folly jumped up and down with glee, and clapped her hands joyfully, and cried, "Hear, hear! Some fun at last," — until every point of her costume jingled as though with expectant glee.

A clown sprang up on to the shoulders of a passing domino, and, flourishing his conical-shaped hat between his finger and thumb, announced in stentorian tones: "*Mesdames et Messieurs*, listen to the great speech of the unknown. Subject, *De Pompadour*."

Victor stepped forward. He made up his mind his hour had come. Fired with resolve, he determined to become famous. "My friends," he began. "The *De Pompadour*, one of our goddesses, one of our historical goddesses, has recently been assailed in the columns of one of our leading journals. The writer of this article has denied her once famous beauty. I propose to-night to reaffirm it. *De Pompadour* assumed at one time the empire over crowned hearts. That lady," and he pointed to the now conspicuous figure of his client, from whom her companions had fallen away, as though for the first time remarking her wonderfully beautiful costume, instead of solely her brilliant sallies — "that lady has been chosen to fill this rôle because of her grace, her elegance, her charm. She fills it; but she is better than the original, finer, fairer. I ask of you, could there be anything more ravishing than that coiffure, than that regal air of hers? Would the republic were an empire again, if only to make her its queen!"

"I vote," cried the clown, who had been struggling for utterance all through this rather exalted discourse, "I vote we lift her in our arms, and bear her to the gallery above, as evidence that we have revolted at the aspersions cast to windward in regard to her beauty. There we will enthrone her, as she deserves, upon a throne formed of our shoulders and hands, and thus call into play our energies and signify our willingness to place ourselves in evidence as her slaves."

And then the tossing, heaving, laughing, frolicking crowd descended upon that luckless *De Pompadour*, and in spite of her protests, carried her, more or less roughly, to the gallery above, where, on a throne formed of kneeling Pierettes, with a grouping of the lilies-of-the-valley behind her, and butterflies hovering

about her in the figures of the danseuses, who clambered up the marble pillars in order to gaze upon the radiant figure in their midst, she was crowned the Queen of the Mid-Lent night.

Victor's joy knew no bounds. From domino to domino he flew, gesticulating violently, explaining vociferously, arguing noisily, and indicating with his fat, stubby forefinger his idol, who, up there, at the point of vantage above the marvelous marble staircase, held her little court until seven o'clock next morning.

In the gray dawn Victor took her home. His head was whirling. His limbs felt like sodden lumps of lifeless muscle. His eyes burned furiously. But for the five hundredth time in his career his heart had passed out of his keeping,— this time into the hands of *De Pompadour*, who never once had lifted her mask, in spite of all his pleadings and the pleadings of her comrades.

The carriage drew up finally. The course was very short.

Victor, half asleep, looked up as he assisted his companion to alight, and there before him, as in a dream, he perceived his own neighborhood. The butcher who sold high-priced game on his high-priced corner. The laundress next door,—and there was the shop of his rival, Stephanie!

The great show-windows were covered by iron shutters for the night, to be sure, but dancing above them, in gilt letters on a black ground, he read: "Stephanie. *Coiffeur à la Mode.*"

"Where are we?" he ejaculated, choking.

De Pompadour laid her hand upon his arm. "But enter," she said, in the sweet voice he so well remembered. "My shop is yours, *mon petit* Victor. You have brought me to-night a fame so great, a content so absolute, that I wish to thank you for it."

Bewildered, unable to comprehend it all, he gazed around him! At the counters, heaped with magnificent shell and rhinestone pins. At the mirrors lining the walls. At the long rows of cases containing cut-glass bottles of every color, and every scent extant. At the heavy velvet carpet. And finally at his adversary, who, unmasked, stood repentantly before him, her hands clasped together, and raised in pathetic appeal.

"I concluded," she explained, in the silvery voice he knew so well, "I concluded that you were the greatest artist in your line I knew. Whereas, before, I conceded your ability, I had not

conceded your originality. You conquered me. Why not, *mon petit* Victor, consolidate our interests and make together the house of houses for the coiffure? We will fashion wigs, we will create dyes, we will let loose upon the public eternal youth, elixirs of life. The world will come to us for our secrets. We will hang upon the peg of its weaknesses our united strength. We will call this the *Maison Stephanie-Victor*. We will suppress the little shop in the *Chaussée d'Antin*, and start a new one out of the munificence of your genius and my talent."

Victor stood regarding his adversary with blazing eyes. He had found his ideal, — a woman who understood him, who could help him drag his dreams out of chaos into light.

"I have it," he shouted rapturously, with a vigorous thump on a neighboring counter with his fat fist; "I have it. You shall be Madame Victor!"

"Agreed."

And that is the reason that the little shop on the *Chaussée d'Antin* is no more, and that the *Maison Stephanie-Victor* makes a specialty on its self-advertising cards of a cupid, who, with a pair of asses' ears perched upon his curly head, and a black domino over his naked dimpled arm, stands daringly confronting a tiny figure dressed as *De Pompadour*, who has drawn back in simulated rage, in order to better stab him with a jeweled hairpin she carries in one little mittened hand.

The Parchment Diary.

BY WILLIS B. LLOYD.

FIVE people, sitting on the piazza of the Crawford House, watched a little party of men and women who were starting out for the ascent of the Mt. Washington bridle path. As the conversation turned to reminiscences of travel, one of the party, who by his dress and bearing showed himself no stranger to adventure, said quietly: —

"By the way, speaking of mountain climbing reminds me of the hardest ascent a friend of mine ever made. He had climbed the Himalayas from Simla and the Alps from Chamouni, but the hardest climb of his life was up the almost perpendicular cliffs of the Quarantania Mountain."

"Quarantania?" said a member of the party. "I've heard of most of the famous mountains of the world, but I confess this one is new to me."

"It would be strange if it were familiar," said the traveler, "for it is situated on the west bank of the River Jordan, quite outside the highways of travel even in the Holy Land. Yet among these rough, lonely cliffs, almost on the other side of the world, my friend happened upon a nugget of American romance."

Then, after a brief pause, "Yes; it was undoubtedly one of the toughest climbs ever undertaken by any one," he said, as if to close the subject.

"But you are not going to stop there, just when you have whetted our appetites for more?" asked a bright-eyed girl. "We want to know all about the climb, how the 'nugget' was discovered, and all the rest."

Then, as the members of the group listened expectantly, the speaker continued: —

"This friend of mine was on his way up the Jordan by camel-

back, from the Dead Sea, to Jericho. After leaving the barren, salt-washed shores of the soulless ocean of Sodom, the valley of the sacred river with its fresh-waving meadows and graceful copses of shade was welcome to the weary traveler. From eight to twenty miles in width, the Jordan sweeps westward to Mt. Hermon and the Sea of Galilee, flanked on the right by the grand hills of Moab and of Gilead, and on the left by a rugged range, of whose jutting cliffs Quarantania Mountain, overlooking the ancient city of Jericho, is the most prominent.

"It was twilight when my friend reached the base of this towering peak, the very one where Christ is said to have fasted forty days, and to have been tempted by the devil. As he rode along with his Arab guide, a series of little holes high up in the side of the cliffs attracted his attention. The guide offered no other explanation than that they were 'caves,' but a field-glass showed that they were not natural formations, and persistent inquiries of the guide brought out the fact that they were the cells of a strange order of Greek anchorites. These hermits never leave their solitary retreat, where they dwell almost as remote from the haunts of men as though they were on the planet Mars. Even their food they obtain in no ordinary way, but are fed by carriers from Jerusalem, who fill with supplies baskets let down by long ropes.

"Beyond these few facts the guide could give no information; but my adventurous friend had heard enough to whet his desire for a more intimate knowledge. Accordingly, at daybreak, he announced to his astonished guide his determination to scale the cliffs and examine the strange dwellings. The protests of the guide that never within the memory of man had a visitor ascended to the air-hung monastery were of no avail.

"The ascent was a most difficult one, but the view was magnificent, and it was found, on reaching them, that what appeared from below to be mere pigeon-holes were in reality caves large enough to take in the hull of a gunboat. Beyond these, extending deep into the heart of the mountain, were many cells ranging along the edge of the rock, and lighted by tiny port-holes."

"And were they really inhabited?" asked one of the listeners eagerly.

"Yes, and by one of the strangest bands of religious enthusiasts that my friend had ever seen,—men stately in bearing and patriarchs in appearance, but curious as children concerning the world from which they had been so long separated. Even the sewing of their visitor's shoes, the works of his watch, were new and strange to some of them, and they crowded around him, eager to see and examine every article of his attire. There was one monk, however, who took no part in these demonstrations. This was a man of perhaps sixty, most impressive in appearance, with his long white hair flowing over his brown home-spun scapular, bare feet, and a large *lignum vitæ* cross pendant upon his breast. His forehead was massive, his mouth expressive of spiritual resignation; but it was the almost supernatural illumination of the eyes which held the visitor entranced.

"Meantime, on the stone floor, a lunch was spread for the stranger,—consisting of olives, black bread, Jaffa oranges, and a stone cup of Russian gin, mellowed and softened by age. As he sat eating and talking in Arabic, he inadvertently used an English phrase. To his surprise, the white-haired monk started and turned pale.

"'You speak English,' exclaimed my friend.

"'Yes,' the monk answered haltingly; 'I am an American.'

"His voice and look aroused my friend's curiosity. Indeed, it convinced him that something besides religious enthusiasm had driven this man from his native land to this lifelong exile and isolation. So it proved. During his two days' stay in this strange monastery my friend heard from the monk's own lips his strange story."

"Do tell it to us," exclaimed the bright-eyed girl. "Don't say that you can't remember it."

"Better than that, I can give it to you almost in the monk's exact words, for I can quote from my friend's own records."

With these words, the speaker drew from his pocket a curious little parchment volume, whose worn covers were edged and embroidered with many-colored beads. "It belonged to my mountain-climbing friend," he continued, in answer to their delighted exclamations, "and contains the record of this and many other strange stories gleaned in his travels. The beads upon the

edges were," he explained, "sewed on by some Tyrolean peasant girls, on the eve of a climb among the Tyrolean Alps. The curious pattern on the back was the work of an Indian woman whose husband gave him food and shelter after a tough ascent among the Rockies. In fact, every stitch, and every one of the curious pictures that you see here, stands for some daring adventure. The man simply could not live except in an atmosphere of danger. For awhile I was his companion in these adventures, but he finally grew too reckless even for me. A month ago he tempted fate for the last time."

"Then he no longer lives!" exclaimed one of the listeners.

"No; he was killed by an avalanche while attempting to scale Mt. Blanc once too often. In his will he left instructions that this diary should be sent to me, the former companion of his adventures. It reached me only yesterday."

Then, reverently turning to one of the last pages of the quaint diary, the speaker began reading from a carefully written page, which bore the heading: —

"THE MONK'S STORY AS HE TOLD IT TO ME."

"My early life was passed in the Catskills, where as a lad I attended school, and where I remained until I was nearly twenty. Looking back, I realize that I was a tensely strung, retiring boy, unlike my associates; but when I met Delia, my fair-haired little schoolmate, I felt that this was the only girl I could ever love. My affection and reverence for her grew with my years, until it seemed that her life was a part of mine.

"When at twenty I went to a near-by village to learn stone-cutting I carried with me Delia's promise that as soon as I finished my apprenticeship she would become my wife. Strong in body and mind, I worked as few men ever work, always with Delia and Delia's happiness in mind.

"I was scarcely twenty-one, when Horace Wryburn, a man much older than myself, appeared in the little quarry town. In the fulness of my happiness I introduced him to Delia. He was a man of the world, polished and accomplished, all that an inexperienced girl admires.

"One evening, when I went to call upon Delia, I saw through

the cottage window Wryburn making passionate love to the girl. I heard her confess that she loved him, but must keep her promise to me. Frantic with grief, anger, and shame, I left the cottage and walked the hills all that night. The next day I released her from her promise.

"I did not see Delia again until a month afterward, when she was in her coffin. She had died broken-hearted when the news came to her that Wryburn had a wife in England. Now that she was dead I forgave her; but I hated the man who had wrecked both our lives with a hatred into which passed all the intensity of my love for the dead girl.

"At first this hatred was only a blind passion, but as weeks passed I was consumed by an overpowering desire to put an end to the existence of this robber of my happiness. For days I struggled against this horrible temptation. I avoided any spot where I could meet Wryburn. During the day I toiled early and late. At night I wandered for hours among the hills, vainly endeavoring to shake myself free from the thought that possessed me. It was useless. Every hour the temptation strengthened its grip. An unseen power seemed urging me to the deed which my soul abhorred.

"Finally, there came a night when I unexpectedly came upon the man who had done the wrong. I was walking on the hills near the quarry when I saw Wryburn, reeking with liquor, a burning cigar stump between his teeth, staggering down the path to the powder magazine where the blasting stores were kept. A moment later he pushed open the door and reeled in. I stealthily followed him to the threshold, and peered through the half-open door. There, on a pile of sacking, the man lay, overcome by a drunken stupor. The cigar stump had fallen upon the sacking, and already a small red circle was widening around it. As I looked, it seemed as though the powers of heaven and hell strove within my soul. In a few moments, at the most, the man who had ruined my life and that of the girl I loved would meet with such a death as he deserved, — and through no act of mine. On the other hand, every impulse of humanity urged me to rescue from so horrible a death the man who lay there helpless, at my mercy. As I stood with my eyes riveted upon the rapidly widening circle

of fire, which was inch by inch eating its way toward the powder, my soul hung for a moment in the balance. Then the powers of darkness grasped me with a mighty force. Staggering, panting, struggling, I felt myself forced back, away from the house where that helpless figure lay unconscious, on the very brink of eternity. A second later I dashed like mad along the road.

"Whether the man lived or died I shall never know. Half an hour after the terrific explosion occurred I had gathered up a few belongings and boarded a train for New York. The next day I took passage on a ship bound for the Mediterranean.

"Then followed months in which I tramped and worked my way through Europe, trying vainly to escape even for a moment from the torturing memory that seemed burned into my brain. Finally, I sought refuge in the church. In religion I found the first hope of atonement for my sin. But it was not until I withdrew to this cloud-capped monastery and consecrated myself to a life of fasting and prayer that I have found a moment's peace.

"Even now, after all these years of penance, I cannot rid myself of the fear that during those awful moments in which I yielded to the powers of evil my soul was forever lost."

A Honeymoon Eclipse.

BY GEORGE C. GARDNER.

THE endeavor, almost always made by a newly married couple, to hide, either from their friends or the world at large, the mental aberration inseparable from their new estate, is sure to result in failure. I tried it once myself, and I know.

It was ever so long ago; we had been married only six weeks and were on our way to Washington. Eunice and myself had spent previous winters there, and should probably have gone there on our wedding trip if we had not, while living there, seen so many wedding couples wander aimlessly through the various government buildings, the prey of guides and objects of a rather undignified interest to the rest of the population.

So we waited till we thought we could safely appear a long time married, for then we didn't realize the hopelessness of deceit.

Eunice's dearest friend, Alice Wendell, was in Washington, too, and we were going to stay at the same house with her. It was, Alice said, an *ideal* place, a private family who took three or four personal friends for a slight compensation, and not at *all* like a boarding house, still less like a Washington one. In short, it was perfectly lovely in *every* respect.

All of which, and more written by Alice, we hailed with delight, and found true in every particular.

We finished our lunch somewhere between Chester and Wilmington, and, going into the buffet car forward for a smoke, I ran plump into Tommy Saunders, whom I hadn't seen for three years. We were old friends, and very warm ones. He was just back from Austria and on his way to report to the Agricultural Department on some improved cattle food, or an irrigation scheme,— it

doesn't matter, and I don't remember. Anyhow, he was glad to get home, and anticipating with special pleasure — such is the sensuality of the male mind — a snug dinner that evening at the club with two friends who were awaiting him there. "And you've got to make up the set, Freddie," said he; "it'll be just the old crowd again. I've got a box at Albaugh's, and we'll get in in time to order extra feed for you. But — the deuce — I didn't think, you're a married man now, and only just, too."

I had thought of it, though, while he was broaching the scheme. Thought it all out. It was just the opportunity. Miss Wendell was to meet us. She would take Eunice to the house; they would be able to talk it all over in peace; I should be *de trop* — a fellow always is under the circumstances. And then, the principle of the thing, — for, as I say, we hadn't learned then the folly of deceit as to our newly weddedness, — the principle was fine, and I knew Eunice would agree with me.

So I said in an offhand way, "Oh, that won't make any difference — if you are sure you want me."

"It's a go, then," said Tommy. "Thank God, here's a man marriage hasn't spoiled. Take me back, that I may render thanks to your wife."

We went back, and, as I had expected, she hadn't the least objection to the idea. We knew Alice so well that there would be no rudeness in the arrangement, and I could see that my wife approved, as I did, of the principle of the thing, for she was foolish, too.

We found Miss Wendell at the station, and out of the general fracas which always ensues on the meeting of two dearest feminine friends, she finally grasped the situation. So Tommy and I got them into a hansom, I gave Eunice the checks, — the baggage had been "checked direct to your residence without extra charge," — they departed, and we took a car for the club.

"I can't get over," said Tommy, as we four sat in a semicircle about a small table in the club smoking-room, "I can't get over a feeling of pride in your emancipation. I was afraid marriage might spoil you, but I owe you all possible apologies for ever misdoubting you."

"It is wonderful, wonderful," said Jim Ward. "Stetson, almost thou persuadest me to become a husband."

"Only married six weeks, too," said Hardy; "and if you'd seen him when he was getting wed; I always did admire Eunice, but I didn't know she was capable of this, for I don't think Freddie deserves all the credit."

I know now that the pride which these comments aroused within me was an unholy pride, but I enjoyed it then.

It was after eight when our cigars were ready for the short trip to Albaugh's, and as we went out to the single hansom which Tommy had thoughtfully ordered, "so we shouldn't be separated," I said that I really ought to join my wife. There was, of course, unanimous protest, but after reasoning with them for a moment, and explaining that it was politeness to Miss Wendell (whom none of them knew), and not a relapse into marital weakness, which moved me, they departed leaving me upon the club-house steps.

It was a beautiful evening at its most beautiful hour, when the crescent of the new moon turns from blue-white to silver as the sunset glow fades. From the door-steps and from open windows on the street floated up little waves of laughter and the rise and fall of voices. Somewhere over in Farragut Square a street-piano was playing. The scent of flowering trees and shrubs was in the air, together with the odor, dear by association to every Washingtonian's heart, of the watered asphalt pavements. Just this particular portion of the universe seemed vibrating and pulsating in every part with a supreme quiet happiness. And then I bethought me that the one thing needed to complete the day was a quiet walk with my wife, as we had walked on evenings like this before we were married, and I went briskly down the steps, turned toward Farragut Square, and stopped, smiling to think that I had instinctively turned to go to her old home on Vermont Avenue. She wasn't there now. Certainly not. She was with Alice; and Alice boarded with those people on Seventeenth or Eighteenth Street, and the number? The number I had flatly and fully forgotten, also the name. I had seen them both at home, I had given the number to the expressman when the trunks were checked, and I knew it was somewhere between ten hundred and eighteen hundred and something, — but what? In the confusion of meeting and parting at the station I hadn't thought of it, nor, apparently, had any one else.

The street-piano had trundled noiselessly over the asphalt, and now, squarely opposite, burst into the "Boulanger March" with a crash and clatter that filled the street. I wheeled and fled. I would go down to Albaugh's and ask Tommy if he remembered Eunice's saying where we would stop; then I hesitated. If there was any other way out of it, it would be a little too bad to let the fellows in, if it could be helped. There must be some one else. There was. I remembered now,—the Williamses! They knew Alice and would, of course, know where she boarded.

It took the nearest cabman twenty minutes to get me to their house. It took me three minutes to learn from a servant that the family were all at Deer Park for a week.

I rode back Connecticut Avenue wondering if I could tell the cabman that had carried Miss Wendell and my wife from the station, if I saw him again. All hansom drivers looked alike, still, the station was probably his regular stand, and on looking over the lot I might possibly recognize him.

It was dark now. Pennsylvania avenue was all aglitter with lights, the star in the Capitol lantern burning yellow at the end of the long perspective. There were only six hansoms at the station stand, and the drivers did all look alike. So I made for the cab that stood third in the line for luck. "Did you take two ladies from the 5.30 New York train this afternoon up to —er —Seventeenth Street?" said I to the driver. He looked at me longer than he needed before answering, "Yes, sir, I did."

"Thank God," said I inwardly. To him merely, "Then you can take me there, too."

Now I was sure by his look he was suspicious. "All right, sir," said he. "What number?"

It was perhaps a natural question, but I didn't like his tone; besides, it was an embarrassing question. "You ought to know," said I; "you've just been there."

He was a very Solomon in his own conceit now. I could tell from his face. "I've been to many places since, sir," said he.

I decided upon a mollifying course. "Just remember this number now and get me there quick, and I'll double the price," said I.

"Very well, sir," said he.

I got in and we were off. I shook hands with myself, and settled back in the hansom. As we turned the corner by the Treasury Building his voice came gently through the slide in the roof, "Was it Seventeenth or Eighteenth Street you said, sir?"

"You heard what I said, and you agreed to take me for double fare. If you talk any more I'll take your number and report you first thing to-morrow for overcharging."

"Very well, sir," said he, with injured dignity; "only I understood you to say Seventeenth, and the ladies, I just remember, was to Eighteenth Street."

I had said Seventeenth, but this was no time to argue, so I merely said, "Shut down that lid and go on to Eighteenth."

We drove on, turned into Eighteenth Street, and drove northward, finally turning in and stopping just behind a coupé,—a coupé standing in front of one of the new brick and terra-cotta Renaissance creations which were just beginning then to loom up in the northwest quarter of the town. The creation was brilliantly lighted, a carpet and awning joined it with the curbing, and from the coupé, as my hansom paused, stepped two ladies, strange to me. Their wraps plainly indicated evening gowns beneath, and even as I saw this, a carriage, with clatter of hoofs and jingle of harness chains, closed in behind my hansom.

I punched at the roof lid with my cane. I was mad. "What the devil are you stopping here for?" said I.

"These were the orders you give me, sir," said he.

"You d—" I began, but I realized I was hasty, and changed the sentence to, "Who lives here?"

"Secretary Jameson, sir."

"Is this where you brought the ladies?"

"Yes, sir."

Evidently the man was not lying. The gestures of a liveried individual under the awning intimated that we were blocking the way, for the coupé in front had departed.

"Get out of this, and drive me down to Albaugh's," said I.

"Very well, sir," and with a resounding whip crack we swung about and started for the avenue. It wasn't any use. I might as well find the fellows, make a clean breast of it, and get advice.

I arranged my features in as jaunty a manner as possible when I opened the door of their box, and they listened to my tale with the most grave and earnest attention,— not one of them even smiled. Jim Ward had a bad coughing fit, but it lasted only a moment. Tommy was the first to speak. "I think," said he, "I think, in fact, I am sure, that I have a dead easy solution. We will begin at once, and we will all see you through. The show is slow here, anyhow. Come on! But," he added, "solutions — of problems — are dry work," and he looked at me.

"Yes," said I, "they are. Come on; it's on me."

"Now, then," resumed Tommy, when we stood on the sidewalk five minutes later, "we will take a cab, drive to the station,— hush!" as I opened my mouth in protest; "drive to the station, go to the baggage-room and find out where two trunks that came in from Foxtown, Mass., on the 5.30 were delivered, get the address, take you to it, get you safe inside the house, and then go back to the club and thank God we're bachelors."

It was hard upon eleven when we reached the Pennsylvania baggage-room, to learn that the man in charge of the day lists of incoming baggage had gone home, that his desk was locked, and that "dey cudden' no one else tell nuffen 'bout dem lis'."

"If anybody else in this crowd has a brilliant idea," said I, "maybe Tommy'll wet it for you this time."

"Say," said Ward, suddenly stopping as we started to leave the station, "do you know Miss Wendell's family?"

"I do," said I; "and they're in Roxbury."

"All right; see if they've got a telephone, and if they have call 'em up; there's a 'long distance' right over there across the waiting-room."

We all looked at Ward and each other. It was a grand idea.

"But it's a little late," I hesitated.

"Late nothing," he retorted; "it's your only life. You come along and watch me," and he led the way to the telephone. The day of the hermetically sealed telephone booth was not yet in Washington, but the maiden at the desk looked bored enough to have been there for fifty years.

Ward's interest was so great that when, after a few "H-e-l-l-o-s, Jersey City? Ye-s. No. What? No, no, no. Yes, Boston.

Hello, trunk — you *did* see him? When — yes — keep off — New Haven. Say, Mame — give me Highlands — tell him I won't — ye-s-s — wait a moment," the young woman, evidently considering Ward the principal, handed him the 'phone, he plumped into the chair and opened the conversation himself. "That Mr. Wendell? Well, can you tell me your daughter's address? What? Where? Why, here — no — no — Washington. What? Washington — Washington, D. C. What? No, no, not *street;* D. C. A, b, c, *d;* a, b, c, *e*, yes. Hold on, central, let me talk. Yes. What? Why, this is War — No, I mean Mr. Stetson — Stetson. Yes — no. This isn't Stetson, but he wants to know Miss Wendell's address, wants to find his wife. Hello, get that? No, *wife, no,* WIFE! He can't go home. Hey? Say, get off this line. I'm talking for Stetson. He can't remember where he wants to go to — "

"Here," said I, "for heaven's sake give me that 'phone."

The fifty years of boredom had totally disappeared from the young lady operator, her face displayed a lively interest.

"Good evening, Mr. Wendell," said I. His voice came faintly back, "What's the matter with Alice?"

"Nothing. I want her address. I came on to-day with — "

"Hold on, I didn't catch that, say it again."

"My wife's with Alice, and I wanted — say, stop ringing, will you? Hello! No, no; her address — where she lives."

"Just repeat that once more."

Here a sweet feminine voice broke in, "Did you get them, Washington?"

"Yes," I roared. "Say, repeat for me, won't you?" and after I had instructed it, the voice caroled, "He wants your daughter's address, so as to get home. He don't know where to go to find his wife."

Then the first voice, "Tell him I don't remember the number; somewhere up in the northwest quarter, on Seventeenth or Eighteenth Streets; name sounds like Carr or Barr. Tell him I'll wire it in the morning. Can't get it now. Anything — "

"Five minutes are up," broke in a third voice.

"Hello!" from the second voice again; "name sounds like Barr. Yes. Say — Washington — what?" Then dead silence.

The young telephone lady said, "Three fifty," gave Tommy a baby stare, and we left the room.

"Some one on Seventeenth or Eighteenth, name sounds like Barr. That's easy," said Ward. "Now, then, driver," to the last cabman left alongside the curb, "just hustle us up to the Parallel Club; yes, all of us, we're light. There's nothing like a telephone; wasn't that an idea of mine, though? Gee!" for the body of the cab had collided with the axle as we crossed the car tracks. "We'll just take the directory and look up the Barrs, and the Carrs, and the Darrs, and — and so on — that are on Seventeenth and Eighteenth, and there you are, slick as a whistle."

We unloaded ourselves onto the pavement in front of the club as a young man came down the steps. It was just midnight. "Hello, Groton," said Tommy.

"Morning, Tommy," said he. "You're late back from Albaugh's."

"Yes, been driving round a little since," said Tommy. "You know Groton? Beg pardon; Mr. Groton, Mr. Stetson."

"Mr. Stetson of Foxtown?"

"The same," said I.

"Your wife's looking for you, said he. "She has just come to stay with Miss Wendell, has she not, at my aunt's, Mrs. Starrs? She said you were to be at the club for dinner, and that I might perhaps meet you and bring you home."

"I shall be delighted to go with you," said I.

The Captain's Last Cruise.

BY STANLEY EDWARDS JOHNSON.

THE eighty-five years of Captain Josiah Lemuel Bass sat lightly upon his broad shoulders. He was the joy and wonder of the remote Cape Cod village, where, as he said, he had been "hauled up" for the past twenty years.

Like his valiant old whaler, *Nancy B.*, he had served his time, and voluntarily had been "honorably discharged." The old ship and the old Captain sailed into Nantucket harbor with a cargo of oil, for the last time, in 1875. When the two parted company the Captain's face was somewhat strained, but he endeavored to be as merry as ever, and succeeded pretty well as he bade farewell to his crew as if they were to meet again the next day. *Nancy B.* was taken to New Bedford, and has been rotting at the wharf ever since; and Nancy Braley, the Captain's wife, was soon after gathered to her fathers.

Thus deprived of the two treasures he loved best, Captain Bass returned to his old birthplace on Cape Cod. Here for years he followed a regular routine. He visited the captains' room, where the old salts lived over the old days. Then, if he had a fair wind and fair weather, he would make a round of the boat-builders' shops, where he delighted in watching the catboats and dories in course of construction. Each year he made two sad pilgrimages,— one to New Bedford, to see the *Nancy B.*, and the other to the old North Graveyard, at Nantucket, where he scraped away the moss and lichen from the headstone of his wife.

The Captain was a very hale and happy old man. He had been an exceedingly prosperous whaler, and no one knew how many thousands he had stowed away in his lockers. He was the sweetest, jolliest old sea-dog in his old home, where he had as compan-

ions the boys he had played with in his youth. They were now wave-worn sailors like himself. In all there were over a score of octogenarian seamen whom he met and chatted with in his daily rounds.

Captain Bass had an old-maid niece, Hittie, who kept his house, and, in a futile way, tried to prevent his spending his income on his friends. He knew he had much more than enough, and he was too generous and kindly to see his brethren suffer. Every morning he rolled out of his house at half after six, with his cane tucked under his arm, and his black pipe blowing such clouds of smoke in his wake that he resembled a steamer sailing on a swelling sea. His seamed and grizzled face beamed kindly upon all, and he was as rosy and sound as a fall apple. And no sun set without some well-applied charity falling from his hand. Besides being charitable, the Captain was a man of sentiment; but this quality seldom came to the surface.

Thus he passed his life until he showed signs of failing health. In spite of all his protests to the contrary, it was perceived that his gait grew slower and that his gaunt form bent a little under the weight of age. And at last he acknowledged himself that he was on his "last legs."

For twenty years there had lain in the Captain's back yard a large, round, black log. It was about thirty feet long. It had been picked up on one of his voyages, and was probably a part of the cargo of a wrecked vessel laden with mahogany. This was all that was known of it, and when Captain Bass was asked what he intended to do with this valuable piece of flotsam and jetsam, he came nearer than he ever had to losing his always serene temper.

One day when the old sea-dog's legs were stiffer than usual, it was noted that the log was being hauled away and that it was landed at the sawmill up the street. The little village was wonder-struck, but neither the sawyer nor the Captain gratified its feverish curiosity. It was sawed into boards and little timbers and into other forms which mystified the people. The wood was beautifully grained, and, of course, well seasoned. The most of it was stowed away in the Captain's barn, but a part of it was sent off — where or for what purpose it was unknown, even to the Captain's niece.

Curiosity was now above blood heat throughout the village; but no one dared to ask questions, and Captain Bass went about his usual routine when the weather permitted. By the more observant it was noticed that his face grew daily more sweet and tender, and that his "amen" in the little church was sanctified with a spirituality that the elders seldom attained.

One day, several weeks after the lumber had been shipped, the Captain's neighbors were brought to their windows by the sight of an express team unloading several large packing cases at that worthy gentleman's door. Naturally, popular fancy at once connected these cases with the mysterious lumber, and soon his niece was the object of calls, and questionings, and hints from every side, all, of course, directed toward the discovery of the contents of the boxes. But from all these quests the curious in spirit came away unsatisfied. And for excellent reason: Hittie Bass knew no more than they. On the day of their arrival she had seen the packing cases opened, and had also watched while certain mysterious bundles, wrapped in tissue paper, were carefully removed. She had also watched them conveyed to an unused room adjoining the dining-room, in which were stored some padlocked sea-chests, dust covered, worm-eaten, and filled with unknown treasures that the Captain had gathered on land and sea. But what these bundles were she had never discovered, for her uncle guarded the key of the storeroom with the care of St. Peter himself; and neither hints nor frowns had been able to gain her entrance.

For many months the mahogany lumber lay gathering dust in the barn, while the bundles remained locked away in the storeroom,—and still the Captain's silence was unbroken. His niece only just escaped being disinherited, when she so far lost control over her curiosity as to be caught in the act of undoing a heavy parcel of shining silver plates — each one apparently bearing an inscription — which the expressman had landed at the house, and which she had opened, scenting some clue to the mystery that so tantalized her. But Hittie Bass had been seized before she had been able to read the simple words cut in the silver, while the Captain's anger had mounted like a raging sea.

After that the old spinster avoided the storeroom as religiously

as though it had been a haunted spot. She tried every possible device for pleasing her uncle, and soon felt secure once more in the assurance that his will would make her the heiress of the village, and would bring her joys which her rather plain personality had up to this time denied her.

Winter came and passed, with no unraveling of the Captain's secret. The spring found the boat-builders busy, and the old sea-dog still painfully making his rounds. In April he suddenly announced that he was going to give a birthday party; and forthwith made preparations for guests to the number of twenty-five, ordering on such a lavish scale that Hittie trembled for her future fortune. She was, moreover, still further exercised by the fact that for several days before the party her uncle spent hours daily in the storeroom that contained the mysterious bundles.

Something, she knew, was going on, in which the birthday party, the bundles, and the silver plates were somehow mixed up together. And only the memory of her former fright restrained her from furtively applying her eye to the keyhole of the Bluebeard's chamber in which such mysteries were brewing.

On the evening of his party Captain Bass was in the best of spirits. The town had bubbled over with gossip concerning the event, and every one invited had accepted. The guests included all the Captain's old friends; and where one had gone to the other shore, there was a widow, or a son, or a daughter, or some relative to represent him. Each received a sailor's welcome, and there was music, singing, and rejoicing. The light of other days came into the eyes of all. Yarns were spun and the jokes of whaling days were again revived. The generous old punch-bowl of willow ware was filled with the Captain's choicest brew, made with his own hands. The ladle was kept busy, and merrier rose the laughter as it did its work.

An old-fashioned supper was served, and the Captain made the chowder. Had they been his own sons and daughters, his guests could not have been treated with more affection and courtesy. Under the influence of his genial spirit new love woke in young hearts, while the old love was resurrected in those of their elders.

When the evening was nearly spent, the closed room at the right of the dining-room was slyly unlocked by Captain Josiah

Lemuel. A silence came over the company, and the old man stood for a moment facing his guests. His eyes looked misty, like the gathering fog in the sunshine.

"My friends," he said, "before you set sail, I'd like to make the evening merrier with a present to each of you, as a sort o' ensign which will always make you think o' me. My voyage, our voyage, old friends, is almost spent. But let us hail the new and strange port, as we've always gleefully cheered, whenever we've dropped anchor in harbor, the one that keeps us safe from the storm. I feel as if I should make this port afore you, and like my old *Nancy B.*, at New Bedford, I shall then be thankful to 'haul up' for an eternal rest. But, friends, I'll not make you sorrowful with a subject that is solemn to most folks. But to me it is a simple and joyful one. That is why, in a merry gathering, I have resolved to make this gift. Come in here and each find your own. May you each approach your final harbor as peacefully and happily as I shall."

For a moment the little company stood motionless, with awed faces, their curiosity overcome by sorrow. But the old Captain's face was lighted by a smile that forbade melancholy, and at an encouraging wave of his hand they filed slowly into the adjoining room. There they saw that which brought the tears to their eyes. Ranged around the room in a shining line were twenty-five miniature sea-chests, each two feet long and one foot deep, made of polished mahogany. All were locked with silver padlocks, and moved on silver hinges, while on the top of each was screwed a silver plate, bearing the name of one of the guests, together with the following inscription: —

"Given in Love and Gratitude to His Friend
by
Josiah Lemuel Bass
On His Eighty-sixth Birthday."

At last Hittie Bass understood the mystery of the silver plates and the mysterious bundles. She soon understood, too, why her uncle had spent so many hours in the room that contained, besides the mahogany chests, the gatherings of twenty years of sea

voyaging. For the chests were not empty. When the lids were thrown back, there lay revealed treasures from almost every part of the globe. There were Cashmere shawls and other soft stuffs from India; brilliant Chinese silks, with articles of vertu and rare woods; packages of sweet-smelling spices, and bottles of rare old wine; jars of aromatic herbs and salts; rare teas and choice coffees, and countless things whose names their new owners could hardly guess. Into each chest the old Captain had packed a rich assortment, and as he watched the glowing faces of the recipients, he smiled as if his enjoyment were as rare as the articles.

But Hittie groaned inwardly.

"He's a-givin' away all my fortin'," she thought; and for the rest of the evening she conversed in monosyllables, and ignored all hints that she should open the remaining chest, bearing the name "Mehitable Josephine Bass."

When, finally, the last guests had taken their leave, with many grateful speeches and prophecies of future happy birthdays in store for their old friend, the Captain called Hittie to him.

"Bring out your chest, Hittie," he said, "and let's see what's in it."

Her uncle sat by the inglenook, toasting himself before the open fire, when the old spinster returned, carrying the box, its polished surface gleaming in the dancing flames. She placed it on the table and sat down, seemingly unwilling to unfasten the tiny silver padlock.

"Why don't you open it, my girl?" said the uncle; and with an almost girlish shyness she complied. Her fingers trembled, but at last the lid flew open and disclosed a glittering interior. The box was divided into two parts by an upper tray, and before her Hittie Bass saw arranged in little rolls a shining hoard of gold coin, sufficient to keep her in comfort all the rest of her life. Almost overcome, and mindful of her selfishness and shortcomings, she crept to her uncle's side and kissed him — an unusual exhibition of emotion that came near settling the old Captain. Then for several moments they sat there silently watching the flickering light of the dying embers as they crumbled into ashes.

The fame of the birthday party of Captain Bass never died. But before the village gatherings had ceased to use it as a topic of conversation the old man's health had visibly failed. His prediction that he had but few days more to live seemed too true.

He could barely drag himself down the street one morning in May, when he appeared at the door of Captain Carroll's boat-building shop; and his voice trembled perceptibly as he took his old friend aside for a private interview. What its subject was nobody knew, but the men in the shop noticed that Captain Bass seemed making some request to which the boat-builder shook his head, with a look of mingled pain and horror. And much they wondered that a friend of the dear old Captain's could refuse him any favor.

From Captain Carroll's the old man moved painfully on to the shop of his old comrade Captain Merrill, who had gone before and had been succeeded by his son. The latter gave him a cordial greeting, listened wonderingly to his request, and consented. But when the young boat-builder went home that night and told his wife what he had promised their old friend, Phœbe Merrill held up her hands in horror at her husband's hard-heartedness. Phœbe's word was law to Joe Merrill, and after supper he visited Captain Bass at his home and said that, after all, he could not perform the task agreed upon. Remonstrance was in vain, and that evening Hittie Bass noticed a tinge of disappointment in her uncle's manner. His face was as serene as ever, but she was a close student of his features, and it seemed to her that he was provoked at something. This time, however, her curiosity was softened into concern that anything should disturb the dear old man's declining days.

Ten days later Captain Bass suffered an attack of paralysis. It was not fatal, but the doctors said it was his death-knell. Afterwards he rallied and was able to move about slowly with his cane. One sunny morning he wended his way again to Captain Carroll's shop. Glad greetings were exchanged, and his old friend congratulated him upon his apparent recovery. The two sat and watched the sea for some time. Finally, Captain Bass broke the silence.

"My friend," he said, "I am not going to get well. I have

come to talk over with you what I spoke of before. I know of nothing I would not do for you. Now, tell me why you cannot grant my request?" Then, in a low voice, he continued what seemed a powerful appeal. In the end it broke down the boat-builder's last barrier. With dim eyes, he wrung in a sympathetic grasp his friend's hand, and nodded a silent assent.

A few days later the Captain passed peacefully away. His will was read in the room which had been the scene of his merry festival a few weeks before, with the guests of that night as listeners, according to his desire. The document divided his liberal fortune generously, including a princely gift to his native town. But its final clause amazed his relatives and friends, and kept the town for two days in a ferment of wonder. "My last desire," it ran, "is to set sail for my last port. Let my old friends gather at the South Beach at sunset, and bid me God-speed to my last haven."

In a sealed envelope were contained detailed instructions to be read only by Hittie Bass, Captain Carroll, and the minister. Upon examining these Hittie was almost crazed with grief, for she believed her uncle insane. But the Captain's good pastor knew the world, and, what is more, knew his late parishioner. His influence soothed the distraught woman, and preparations were made by which the will was to be fulfilled. The setting sun rested on the ocean in rosy light two evenings later, when all the townspeople reverently assembled at South Beach to witness the strange and moving ceremony of the funeral of Captain Bass.

There, moored in the little harbor, they saw a small dory, made all of shining mahogany. On each side of the bow were the words: "Captain Josiah Lemuel Bass." On the stern was fastened a silver plate, which read: —

"Captain Josiah Lemuel Bass
Departed on his Last Voyage
June 11, 189–
Aged 86 Years."

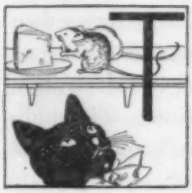
Out of the remainder of the old log Captain Carroll had wrought, as carefully as a sculptor would hew a marble statue,

the craft for his old friend's final cruise. To-day, as he, with three other of Captain Bass' friends, carried the coffin to its resting-place, the last request of his old comrade was ever with him: "Build me a neat little ship for a simple voyage, with God's fair wind, and as snug a harbor at the end as one could ever wish."

The service was of the simplest. The minister read the solemn service for the burial of the dead at sea. Then the old friends of Captain Bass spread the sail, and a fresh, fair wind moved the shining craft from shore. With hats removed and tearful voices, the assembled people sang "Abide With Me." When the song was finished they stood silent, and watched the speeding craft until at last it melted from their gaze into the twilight. If it was ever spoken by passing vessels, the fact was never known to the villagers. And thus peacefully departed the beloved Captain on his last cruise.

The Blow-out at Jenkins's Grocery.

BY ELLA HIGGINSON.



THE hands of the big, round clock in Mr. Jenkins's grocery store pointed to eleven. Mr. Jenkins was tying a string around a paper bag containing a dollar's worth of sugar. He held one end of the string between his teeth. His three clerks were going around the store with little stiff prances of deference to the customers they were serving. It was the night before Christmas. They were all so worn out that their attempts at smiles were only painful contortions.

Mr. Jenkins looked at the clock. Then his eyes went in a hurried glance of pity to a woman sitting on a high stool close to the window. Her feet were drawn up on the top rung, and her thin shoulders stooped over her chest. She had sunken cheeks and hollow eyes; her cheek-bones stood out sharply.

For two hours she had sat there, almost motionless. Three times she had lifted her head and fixed a strained gaze upon Mr. Jenkins and asked, "D'yuh want to shet up yet?" Each time, receiving an answer in the negative, she had sunk back into the same attitude of brute-like waiting.

It was a wild night. The rain drove its long, slanting lances down the window-panes. The wind howled around corners, banged loose shutters, creaked swinging sign-boards to and fro, and vexed the telephone wires to shrill, continuous screaming. Fierce gusts swept in when the door was opened.

Christmas shoppers came and went. The woman saw nothing inside the store. Her eyes were set on the doors of a brightly lighted saloon across the street.

It was a small, new "boom" town on Puget Sound. There was a saloon on every corner, and a brass band in every saloon. The "establishment" opposite was having its "opening" that

night. "At home" cards in square envelopes had been sent out to desirable patrons during the previous week. That day, during an hour's sunshine, a yellow chariot, drawn by six cream-colored horses with snow-white manes and tails, had gone slowly through the streets, bearing the members of the band clad in white and gold. It was followed by three open carriages, gay with the actresses who were to dance and sing that night on the stage in the rear of the saloon. All had yellow hair and were dressed in yellow with white silk sashes, and white ostrich plumes falling to their shoulders. It was a gorgeous procession, and it "drew."

The woman lived out in the Grand View addition. The addition consisted mainly of cabins built of "shakes" and charred stumps. The grand view was to come some ten or twenty years later on, when the forests surrounding the addition had taken their departure. It was a full mile from the store.

She had walked in with her husband, through the rain and slush, after putting six small children to bed. They were very poor. Her husband was shiftless. It was whispered of them by their neighbors that they couldn't get credit for "two bits" except at the saloons.

A relative had sent the woman ten dollars for a Christmas gift. She had gone wild with joy. Ten dollars! It was wealth. For once the children should have a real Christmas — a good dinner, toys, candy! Of all things, there should be a wax doll for the little girl who had cried for one every Christmas, and never even had one in her arms. Just for this one time they should be happy — like other children; and she should be happy in their happiness — like other mothers. What did it matter that she had only two calico dresses, and one pair of shoes, half soled, at that, and capped across the toes?

Her husband had entered into her childish joy. He was kind and affectionate — when he was sober. That was why she never had the heart to leave him. He was one of those men who are always needing, pleading for — and, alas! receiving — forgiveness; one of those men whom their women love passionately and cling to forever.

He promised her solemnly that he would not drink a drop that Christmas — so solemnly that she believed him. He had helped

her to wash the dishes and put the children to bed. And he had kissed her.

Her face had been radiant when they came into Mr. Jenkins's store. That poor, gray face, with its sunken cheeks and eyes! They bought a turkey, — and with what anxious care she had selected it! — testing its tenderness, balancing it on her bony hands, examining the scales with keen, narrowed eyes when it was weighed, — and a quart of cranberries, a can of mince meat and a can of plum pudding, a head of celery, a pint of Olympia oysters, candy, nuts — and then the toys!

She trembled with eagerness. Her husband stood watching her, smiling good-humoredly, his hands in his pockets. Mr. Jenkins indulged in some serious speculation as to where the money was coming from to pay for all this "blow-out." He set his lips together and resolved that the "blow-out" should not leave the store, under any amount of promises, until the cash paying for it was in his cash-drawer.

Suddenly the band began to play across the street. The man threw up his head, like an old war-horse at the sound of a bugle note. A fire came into his eyes; into his face, a flush of excitement. He walked down to the window and stood looking out, jingling some keys in his pocket. He breathed quickly.

After a few moments he went back to his wife. Mr. Jenkins had stepped away to speak to another customer.

"Say, Molly, old girl," he said affectionately, without looking at her, "yuh can spare me enough out o' that tenner to git a plug o' tobaccer for Christmas, can't yuh?"

"W'y — I guess so," said she slowly. The first cloud fell on her happy face.

"Well, jest let me have it, an' I'll run out an' be back before yuh're ready to pay for these here things. I'll only git two bits' worth."

She turned very pale.

"Can't yuh git it here, Mart?"

"No," he said, in a whisper; "his'n ain't fit to chew. I'll be right back, Molly — honest."

She stood motionless, her eyes cast down, thinking. If she refused, he would be angry and remain away from home all the

next day to pay her for the insult. If she gave it to him — well, she would have to take the chances. But oh, her hand shook as she drew the small gold piece from her shabby purse and reached it to him. His big, warm hand closed over it.

She looked up at him. Her eyes spoke the passionate prayer that her lips could not utter.

"Don't stay long, Mart," she whispered, not daring to say more.

"I won't, Molly," he whispered back. "I'll hurry up. Git anything yuh want."

She finished her poor shopping. Mr. Jenkins wrapped everything up neatly. Then he rubbed his hands together and looked at her, and said: "Well, there, now, Mis' Dupen."

"I — jest lay 'em all together there on the counter," she said, hesitatingly. "I'll have to wait till Mart comes back before I can pay yuh."

"I see him go into the s'loon over there," piped out the errand-boy shrilly.

At the end of half an hour she climbed upon the high stool, and fixed her eyes on the saloon opposite, and sat there.

She saw nothing but the glare of those windows and the light streaming out when the doors opened. She heard nothing but the torturing blare of the music. After awhile something commenced beating painfully in her throat and temples. Her limbs grew stiff — she was scarcely conscious that they ached. Once she shuddered strongly, as dogs do when they lie in the cold, waiting.

At twelve o'clock Mr. Jenkins touched her kindly on the arm. She looked up with a start. Her face was gray and old; her eyes were almost wild in their strained despair.

"I guess I'll have to shet up now, Mis' Dupen," he said, apologetically. "I'm sorry — "

She got down from the stool at once. "I can't take them things," she said, almost whispering. "I hate to of put yuh to all that trouble of doin' 'em up. I thought — but I can't take 'em. I hope yuh won't mind — very much." Her bony fingers twisted together under her thin shawl.

"Oh, that's all right," said Mr. Jenkins, in an embarrassed

way. She moved stiffly to the door. He put out the lights and followed her. He felt mean, somehow. For one second he hesitated; then he locked the door, and gave it a shake to make sure that it was all right.

"Well," he said, "good night. I wish you a mer — "

"Good night," said the woman. She was turning away, when the doors of the saloon opened for two or three men to enter. The music, which had ceased for a few minutes, struck up another air — a familiar air.

She burst suddenly into wild and terrible laughter. "Oh, my Lord," she cried out, "they're a-playin' 'Home, Sweet Home!' *In there!* Oh, my Lord! *Wouldn't that kill yuh!*"

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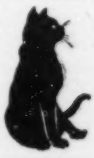

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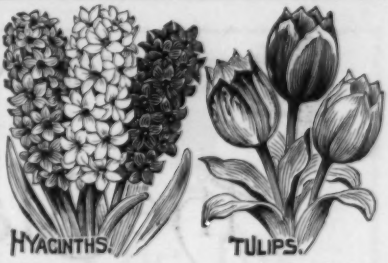

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Conspicuous in the Fall issues will be papers of Travel. *Lafcadio Hearn* will contribute sketches and interpretations of the new Japan. There will be further papers in Mr. Peabody's **An Architect's Vacation** series, the forthcoming one being entitled **The Venetian Day.** A delightful paper of Spanish travel by Mrs. *Miriam Coles Harris* can be promised, and *Alice Brown* will write of a visit to the original Cranford. *Bradford Torrey* will publish further sketches of life and nature in his Tennessee haunts. Other articles of special interest, which can perhaps be classed under this head, will be **Reminiscences of Eastern Travel** by Miss *Harriet Waters Preston;* and *Josiah Flynt*, who has become an authority on the vagrant, will contribute one of his entertaining studies of tramp life, **The Children of the Road.**

The subject of **Education** will, as usual, receive attention. The Atlantic was the first of the leading magazines to make the discussion of important educational questions one of the features of its pages. In early issues will be printed articles by President *Tucker*, of Dartmouth, and Professor *J. H. Wright*, of Harvard

The usual departments and the exhaustive book-reviews will continue to be features of each issue.

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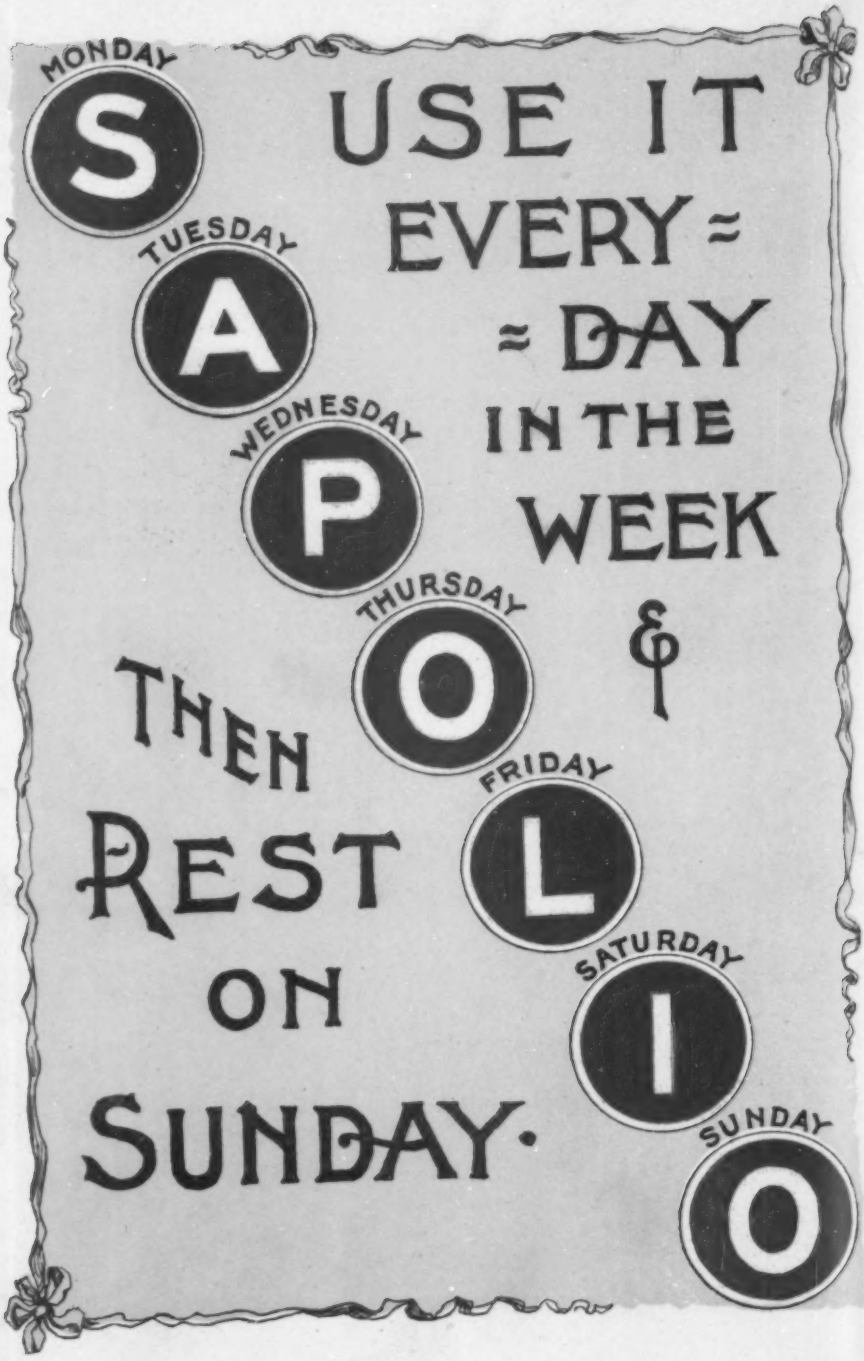
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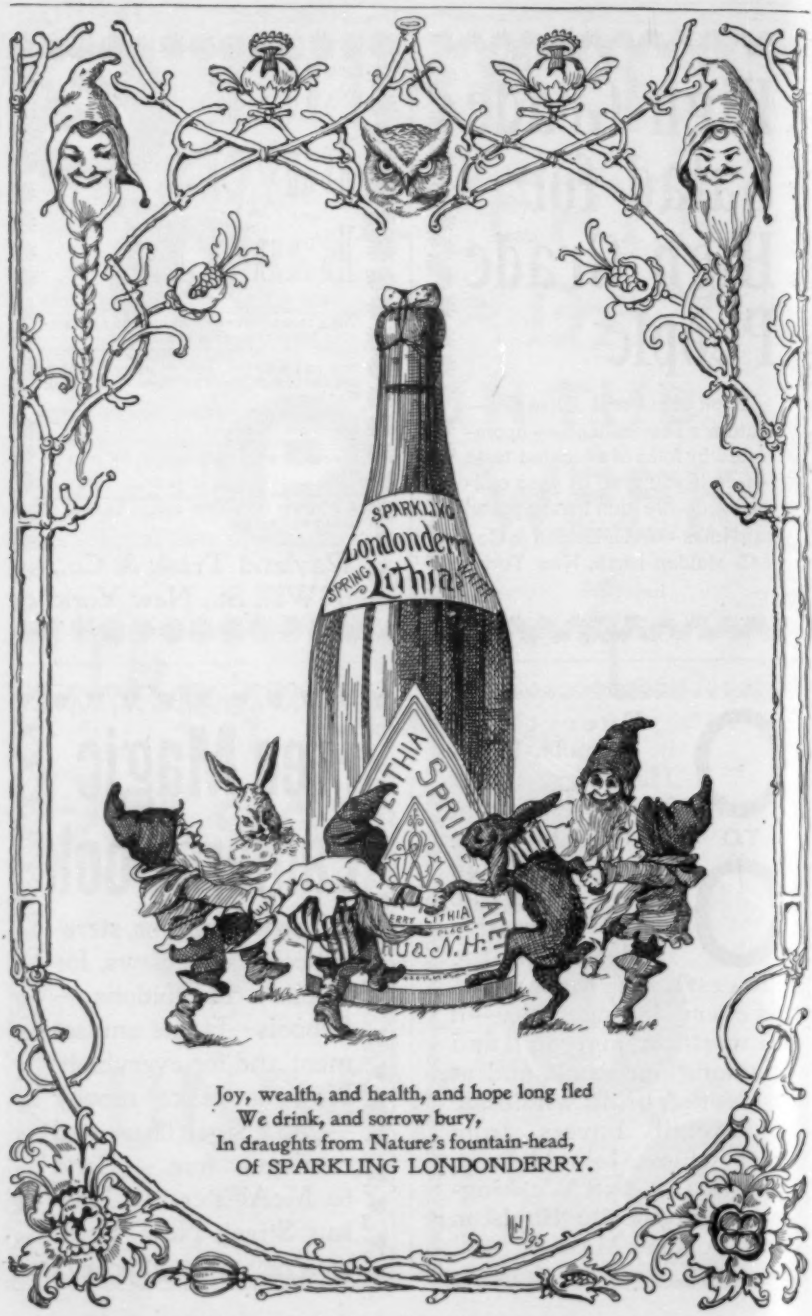

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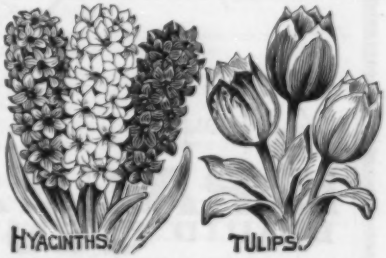

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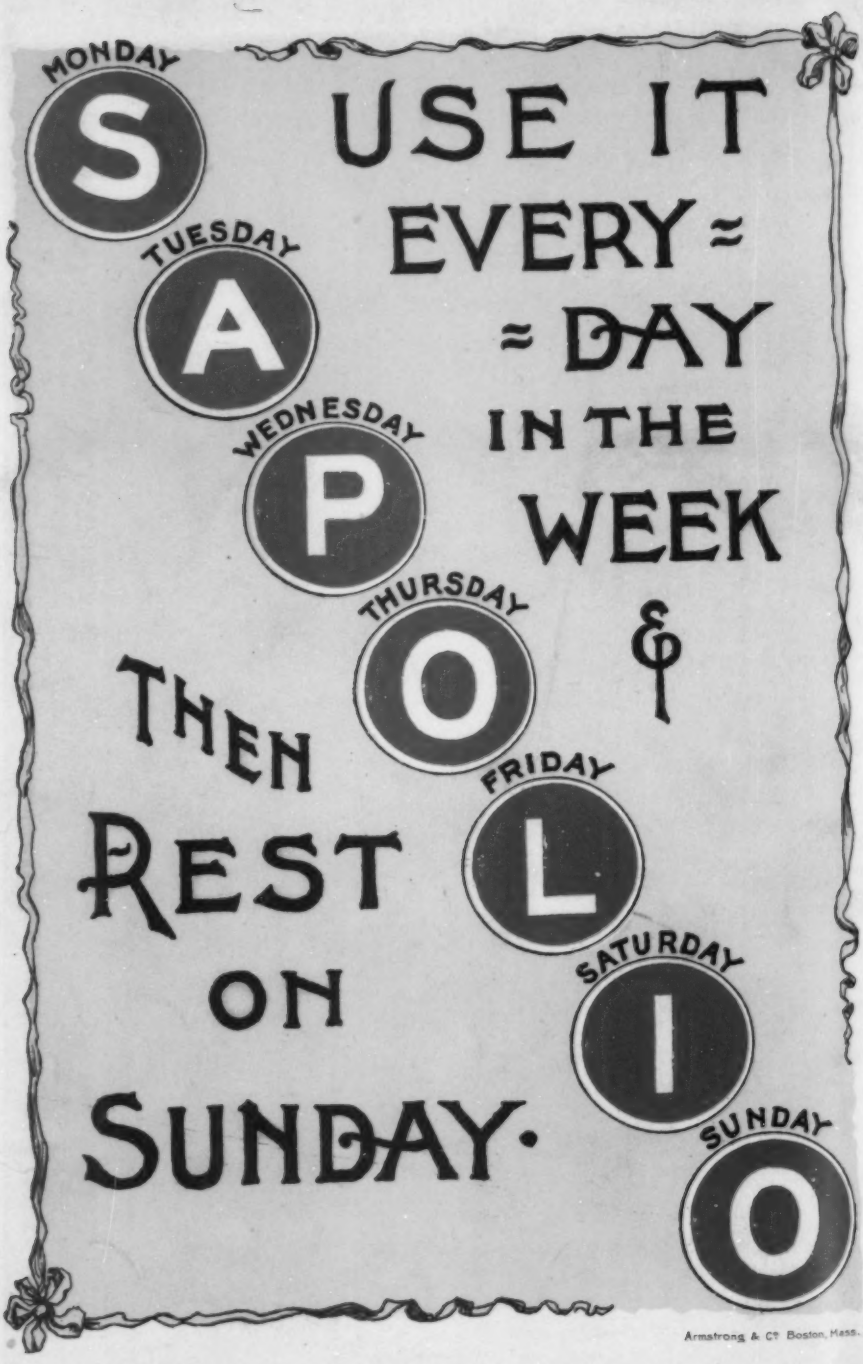
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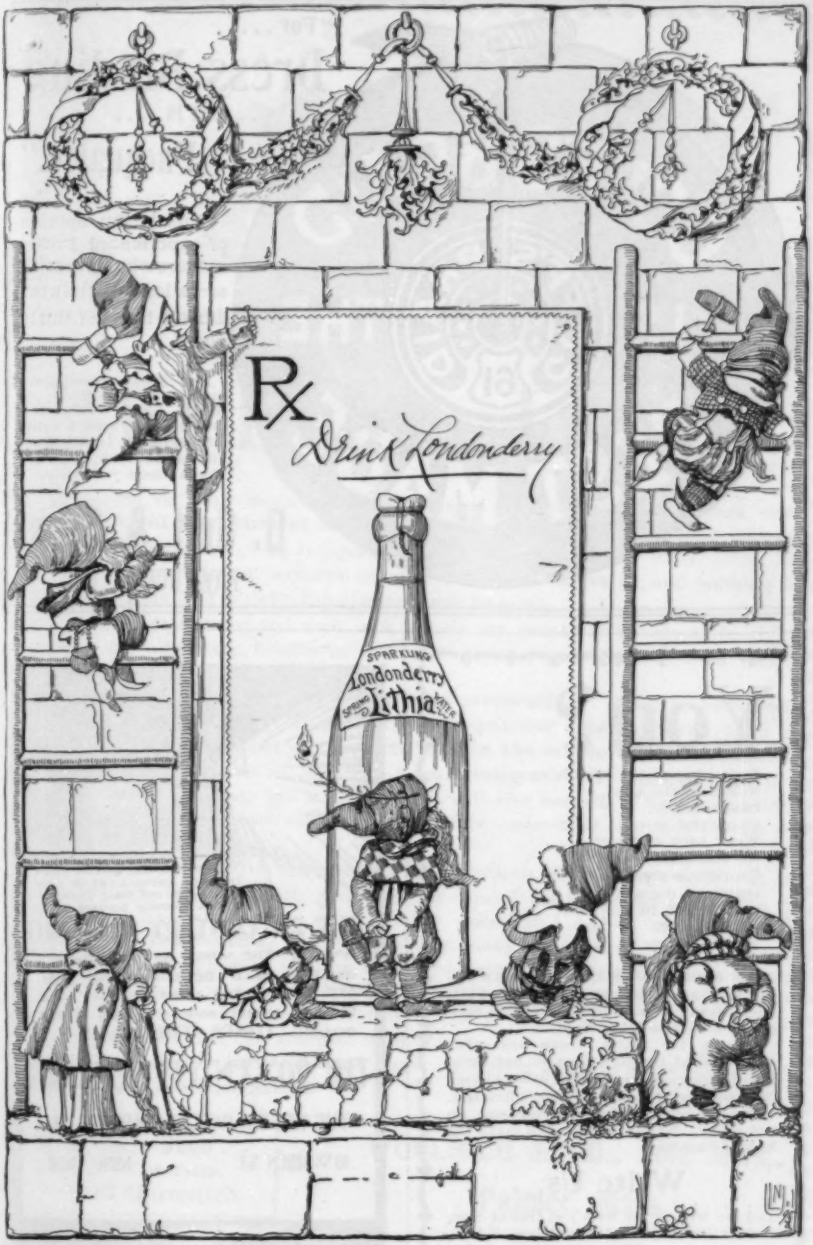

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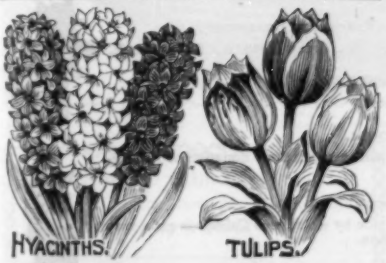

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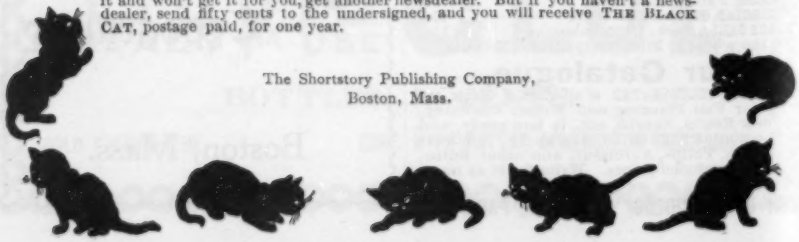

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It is quite easily understood why hair cloth is so elastic and resilient if one will only stop to think that, no matter how many ways human hair is combed, whether twisted, curled, braided, crimped or frizzled, wet or oiled, it will resume its natural position, and, so, too, will Hair Cloth Crinoline, having a weft of *pure hair*, resume its normal condition.

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The Shortstory Publishing Company,
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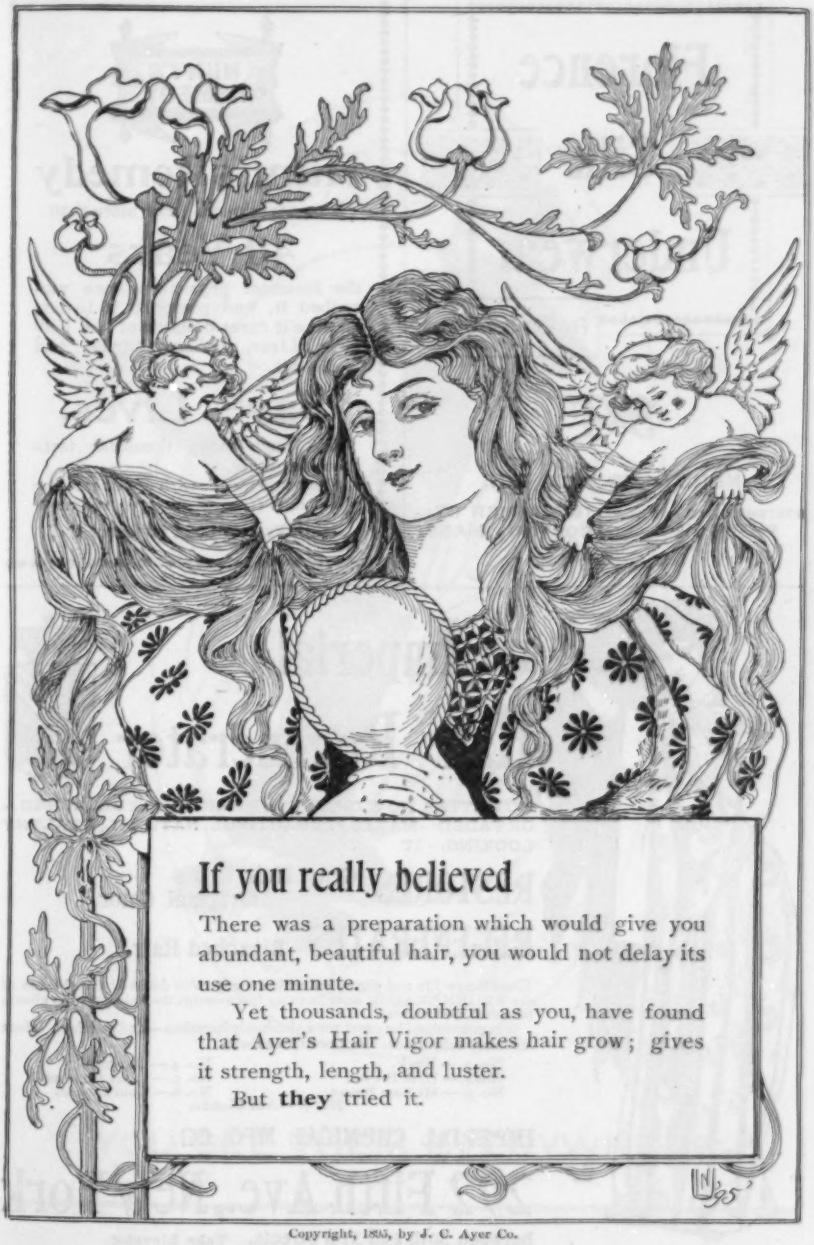
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There was a preparation which would give you abundant, beautiful hair, you would not delay its use one minute.
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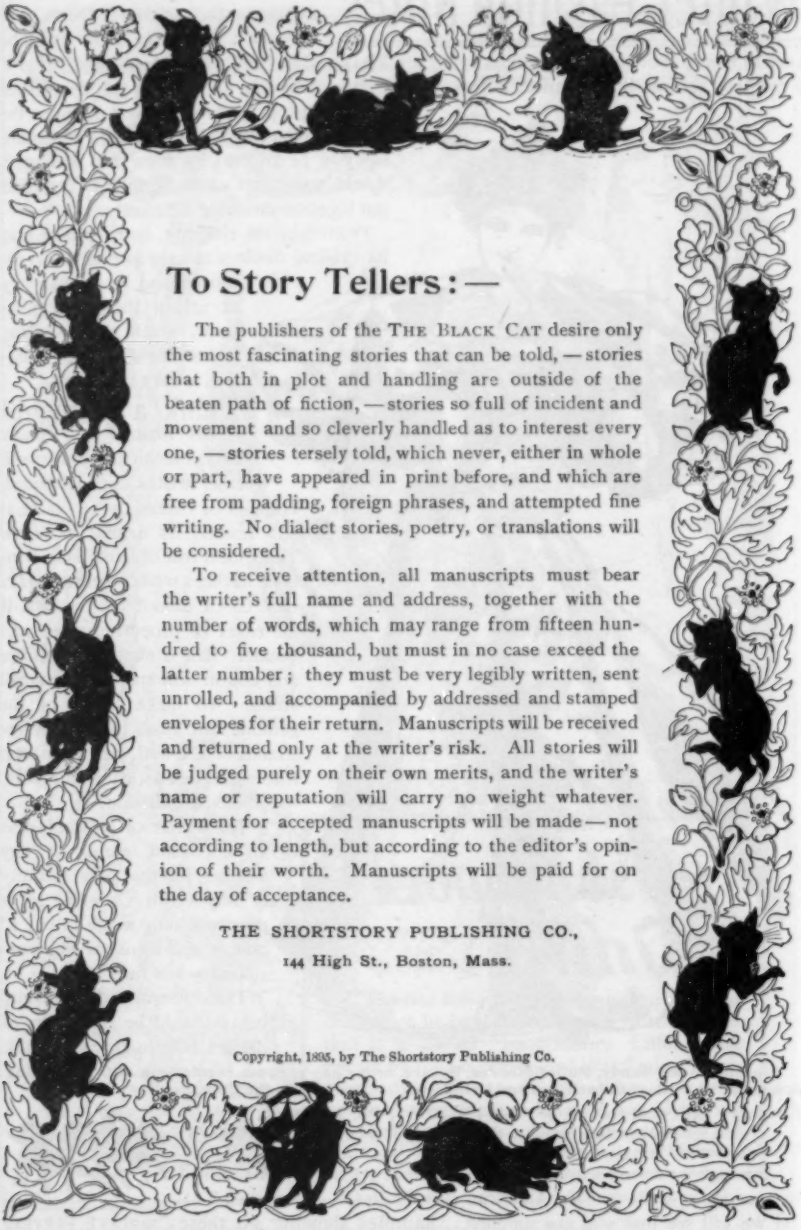

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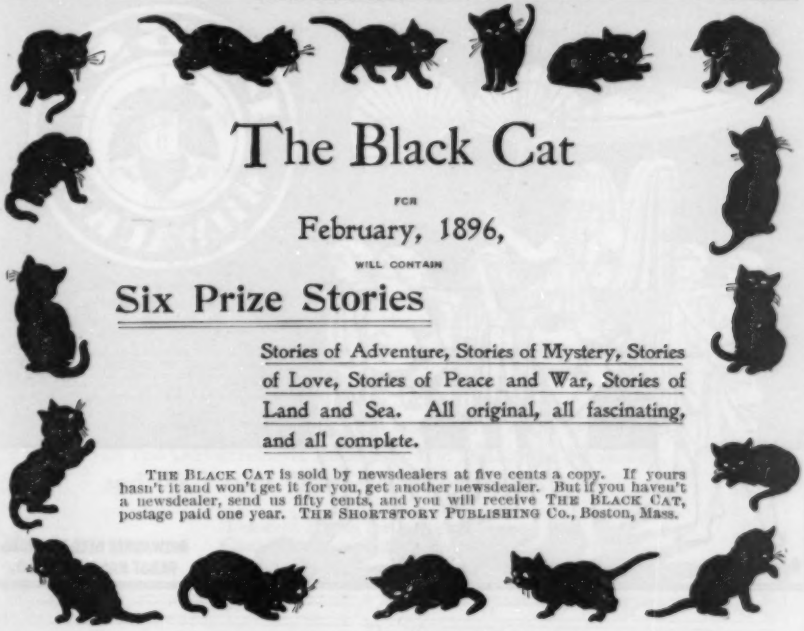

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"Oh, there's substance to it—it's life-giving, vivifying—it gives vim and bounce, it braces—this beneficent Extract of Malt and Hops—
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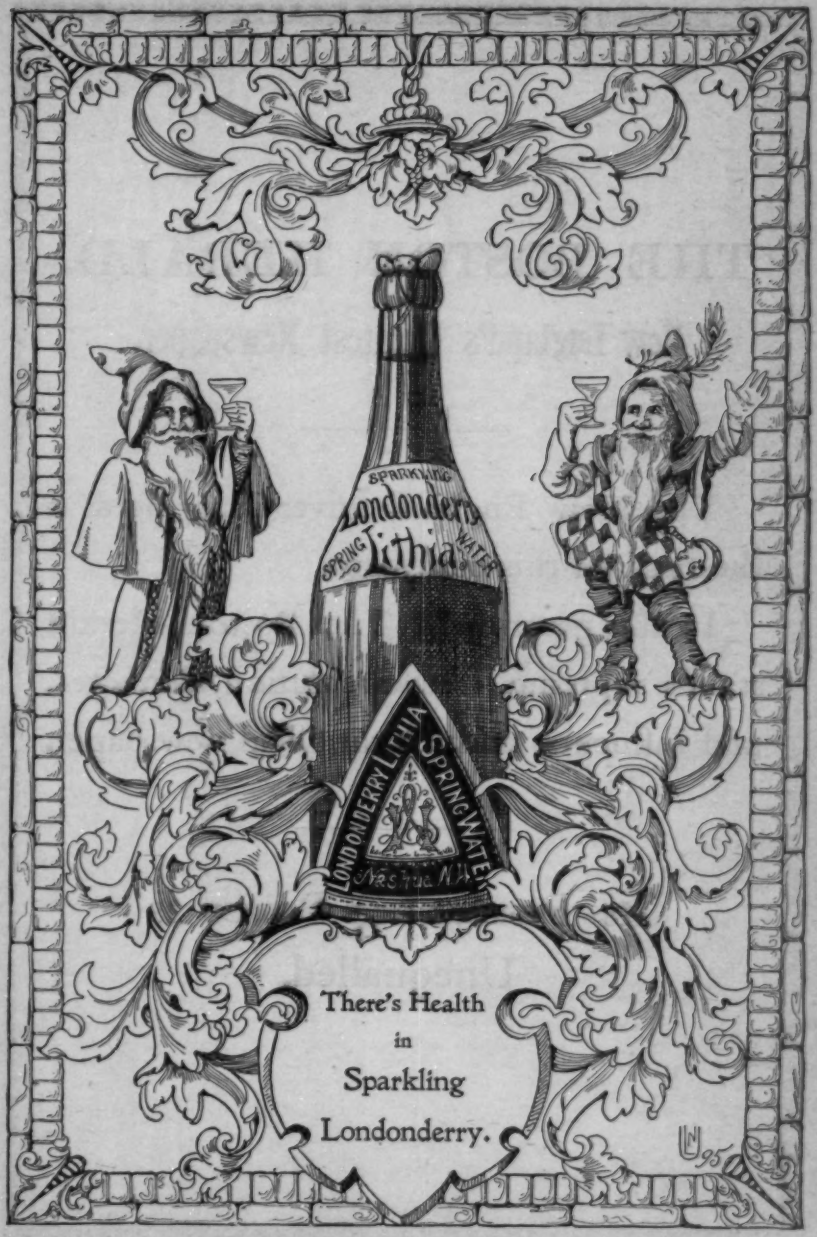

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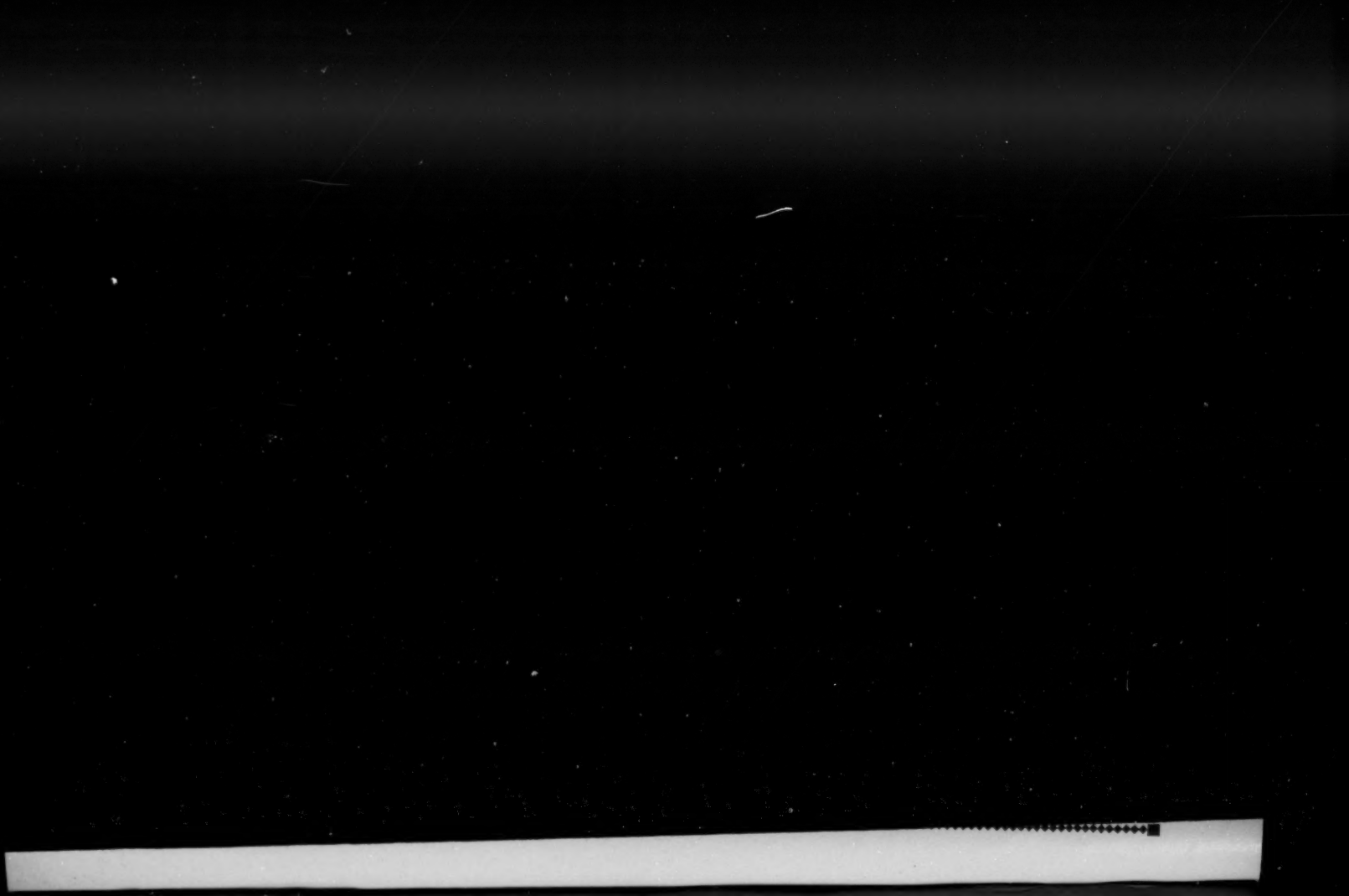

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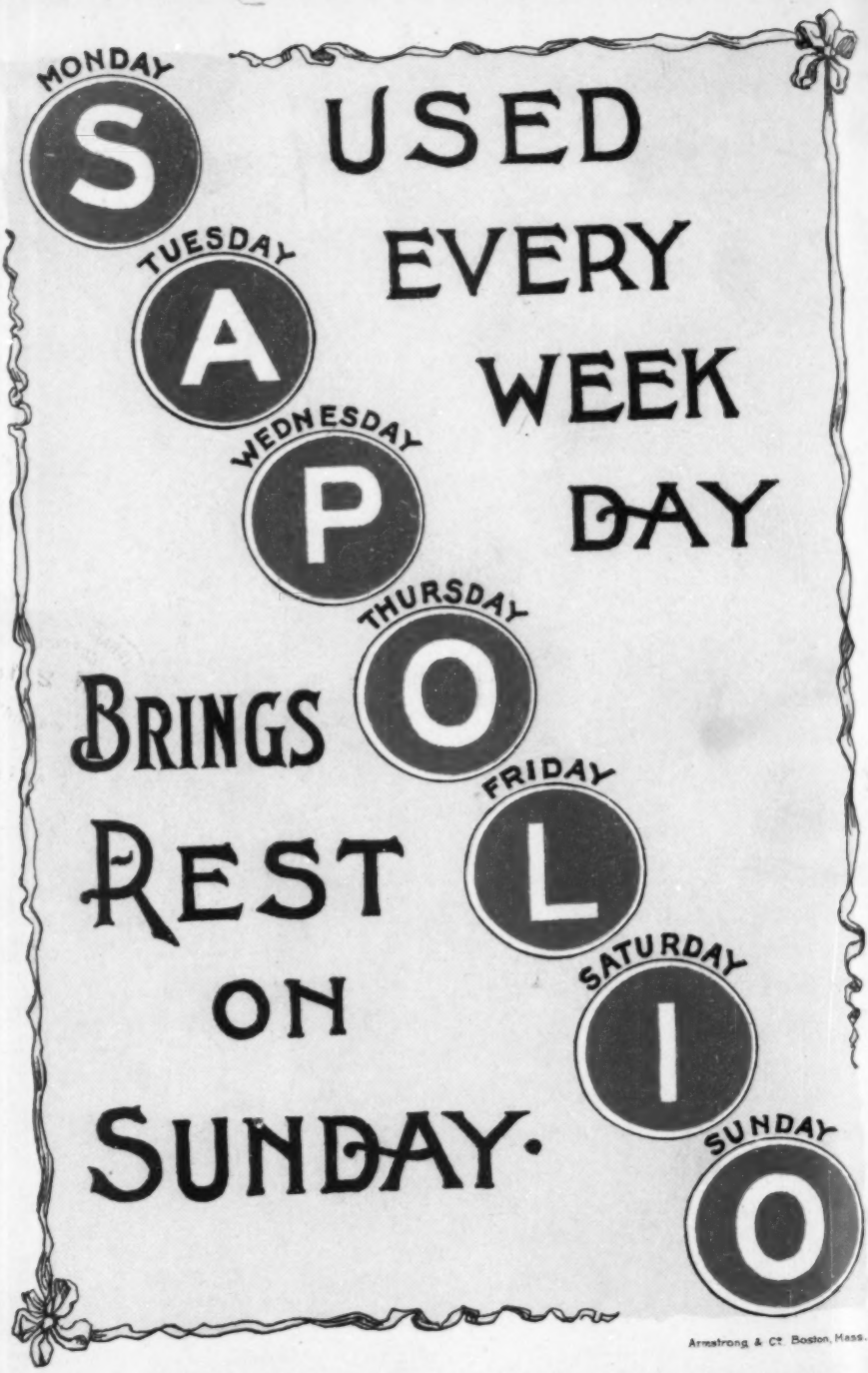
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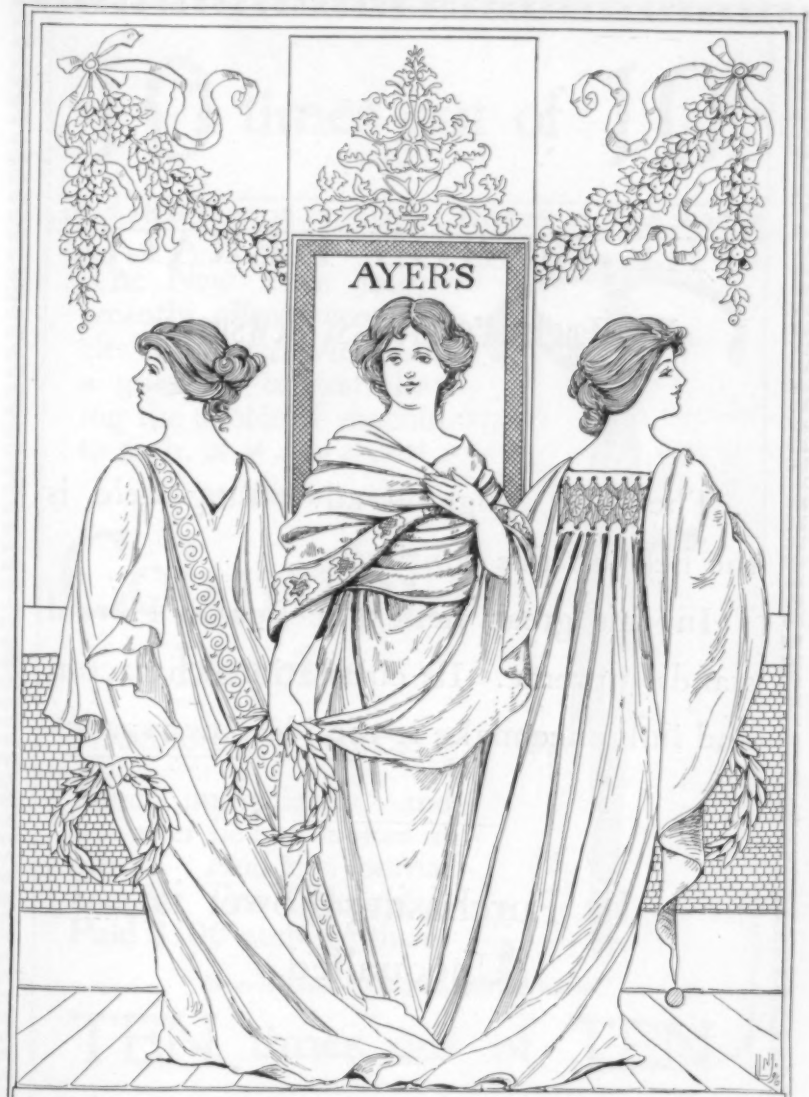

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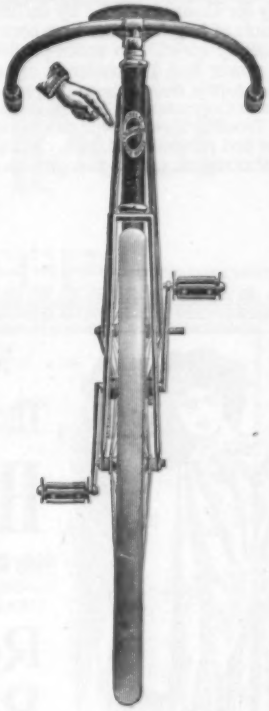

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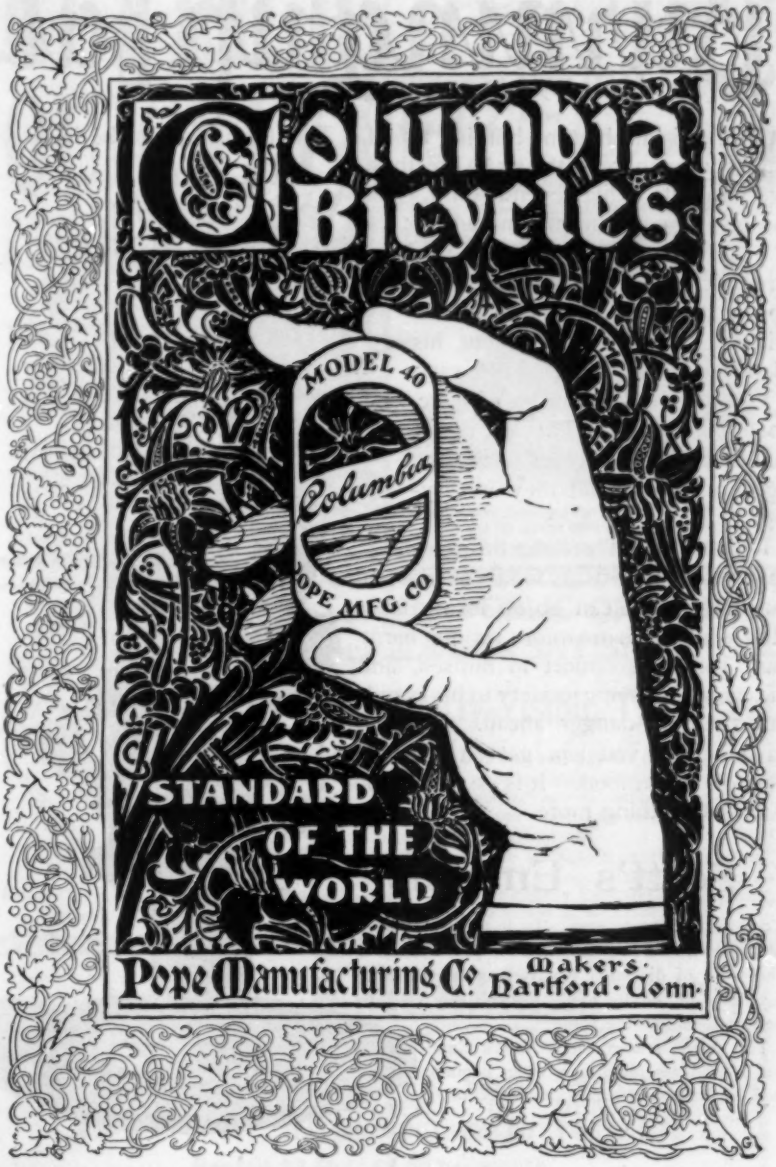
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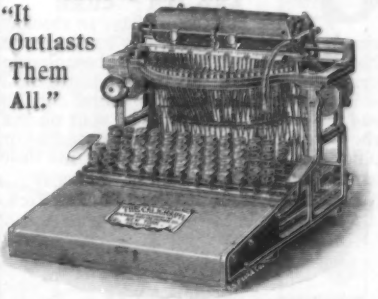

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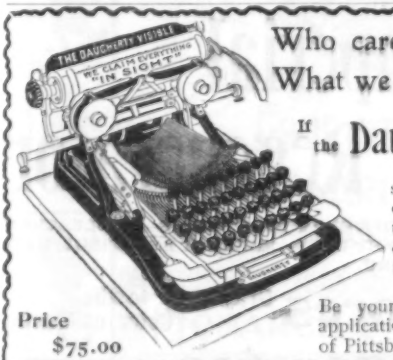

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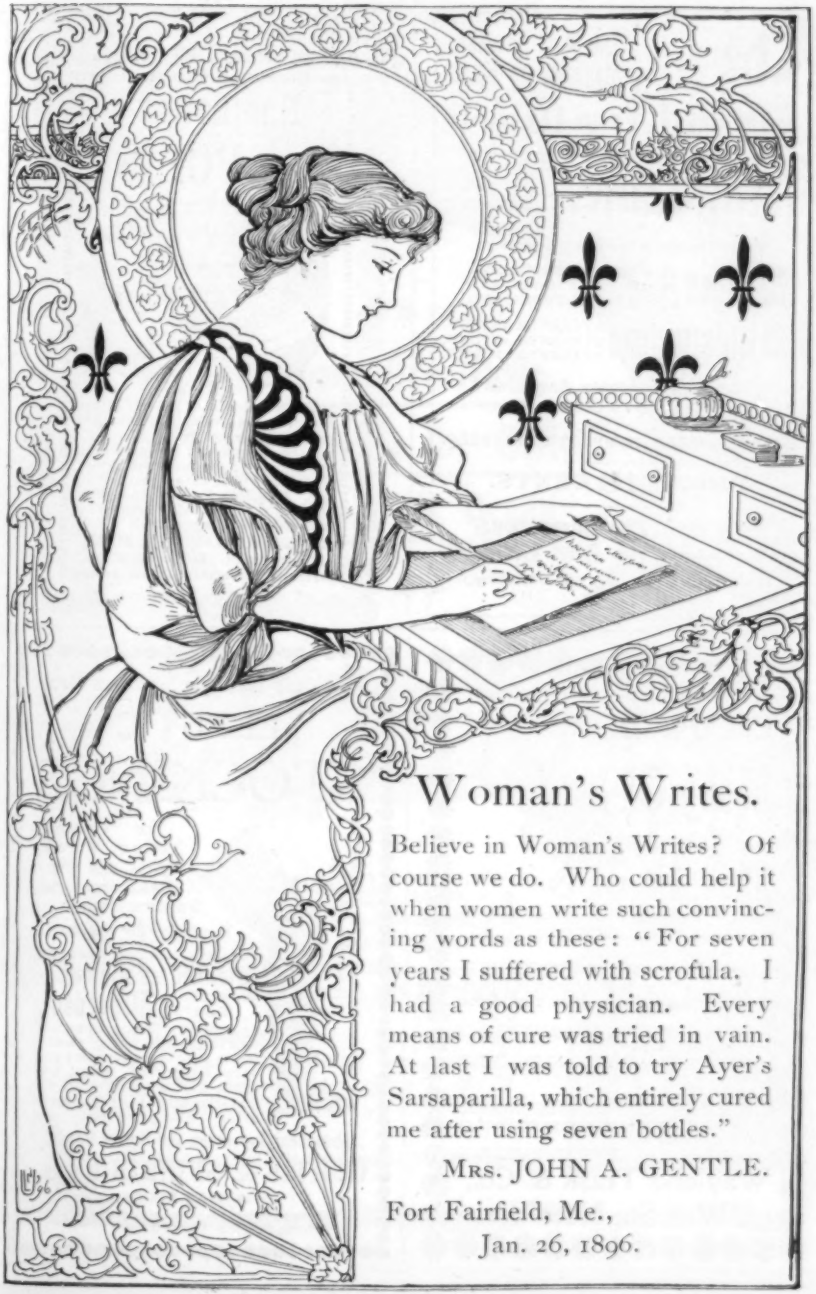

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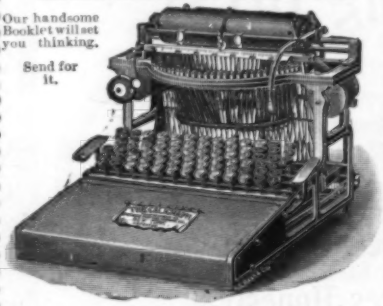

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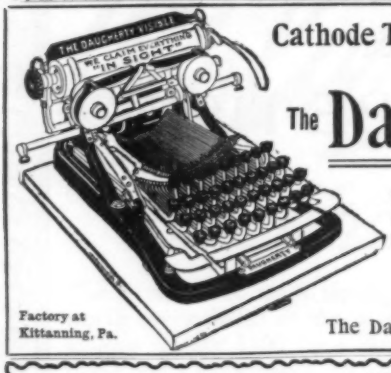

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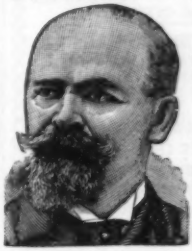

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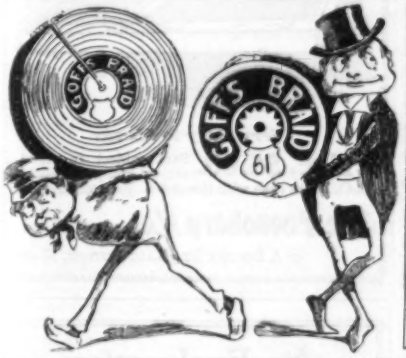

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An Eye Opener! Don't Miss It!

THE BLACK CAT will shortly publish "The Mysterious Card Unveiled," a sequel to "The Mysterious Card," which caused such a tremendous and widespread sensation upon its appearance in THE BLACK CAT for February.

Trade Mark.

The sequel graphically unveils one of the darkest mysteries, and reveals the contents of the accursed piece of pasteboard which caused Richard Burwell the loss of friends, wife, and home. Order of your dealer *now*.

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—the woman who doesn't use *Pearline.* She's tied to her work, and tired with it, too. *Pearline* makes another woman of her. It washes and cleans in half the time, with half the work. Nothing can be hurt by it, and every thing is saved with it. *Pearline does away with the Rub, Rub, Rub. Pearline* does more than soap; soap gives you more to do.

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Air played on treble; accompaniment on bass, which is tuned in groups of chords producing remarkable effects.

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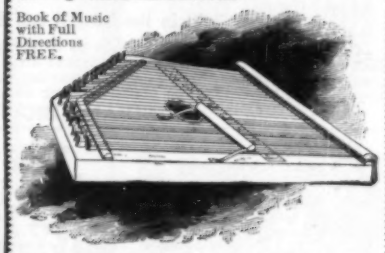

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An Explanation.

Just as the last forms for the May number of The Black Cat go to press we learn that the story, "A Hundred Thousand Dollar Trance," by Eugene Shade Bisbee, which appears in this issue, and for which we paid Mr. Bisbee one hundred dollars, was published in a somewhat different form in the Baltimore (Md.) *World* for March 20 and 21.

Mr. Bisbee informs us that the story as published in the *World* was altogether unauthorized. He says: "I called at the *World* office for my MS., which had been submitted upon the express condition that I might withdraw it if I desired. I was told that I could have it by calling in a few days; that it was there amongst a great mass of manuscripts which, in their rush, was unindexed. I called repeatedly, telling them that I wished to rewrite the story and send it elsewhere. After half a dozen calls I saw the managing editor and explained the matter to him. He took my name and address and a description of the appearance of the MS., and told me if they could find it they would mail it to me; at all events, *it would not be published in the World.* Acting upon this positive assurance, I rewrote the story and sent it to The Black Cat."

As the story in question is our exclusive property, duly protected by copyright, we shall of course not permit the matter to rest here. Meanwhile we offer the public the foregoing explanation.

The Shortstory Publishing Company.

Boston, Mass., March 23, 1896.

A MARKET MAN'S LUCK.

SAVED AT THE VERY BRINK OF THE GRAVE.

BOSTON, MASS. — "I was sick for nearly two years," said George H. Dunning, of Faneuil Hall Market, the historic landmark of Boston. "I was run down, had nervous prostration, lost my appetite, could not sleep without opiates, had little control over my limbs, was so light-headed that I was afraid to walk about alone, could not see except through a blur, had a constant pain in the pit of my stomach, and had abandoned business, pleasure, and, practically, life itself. When the crisis came I was out of my head and my temperature was up to 105 degrees. When the neighbors came to inquire the doctor told them that I was past hope. My nurse made another appointment, as if it was certain that my death would come in five days at the outside.

"I had one chance in a hundred, and I took that chance. All the doctors and medicines had failed in my case, and I threw them all over. It seems as if there are new kinds of diseases in these days of steam and electricity, and new treatments are needed.

"Puritana was just what I needed. When I got a bottle and began using it I found that I was being made over new, just as it says, from the soles of my feet to the top of my head.

"It stopped that miserable pain at the pit of my stomach; it made me eat like a hungry man and sleep like a healthy, tired man. It cleared my head so that I can now see without glasses and walk home through the crowded streets without the least danger of falling down under the horses' feet.

"It seems good to get back to the market again, and it makes me want to hug the man who discovered Puritana when I realize that I am well, even better than I was before I was taken sick. My wife says that it is preposterous to say that anything but Puritana saved my life, for it also saved me from the danger of paralysis. At that time my friends would not have given two cents for my chances. That is why I do not lose a chance to tell about Puritana; for I believe a great many lives could be saved if people only knew what it would do.

"I will never be without Puritana as long as I live, and I believe that will be some time, as I am growing younger and happier every day."

This is not an exceptional case, for it is being duplicated every day.

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It cures from head to foot.

92% of all sickness and all disorders of the Blood, Liver, Kidneys, Lungs, Nerves, Heart, Brain, and Skin is caused by

A Wrong Stomach

Puritana makes the

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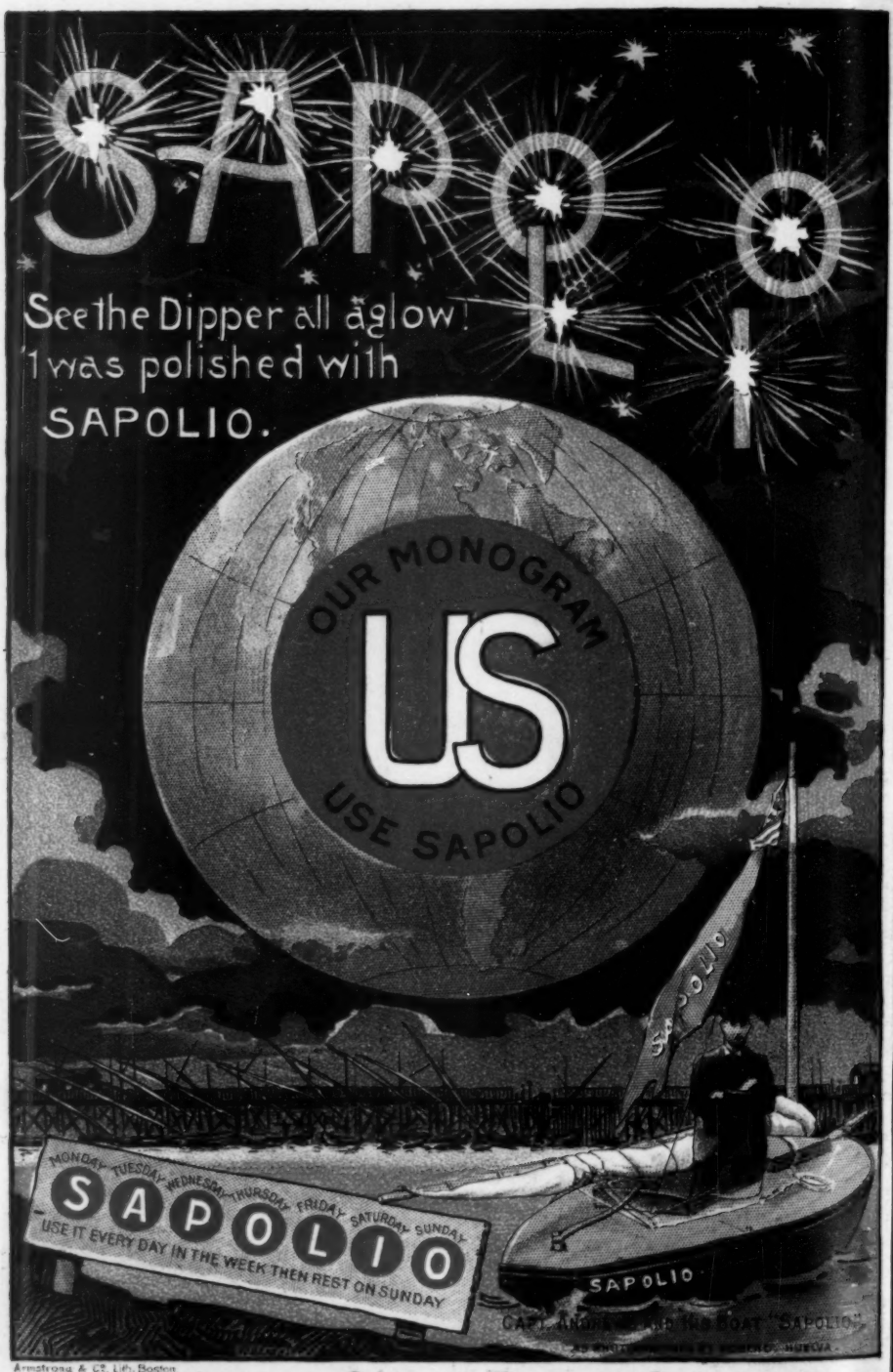
Lungs Right,
Liver Right,
Blood Right,
Kidneys Right,
Nerves Right,

Because it makes

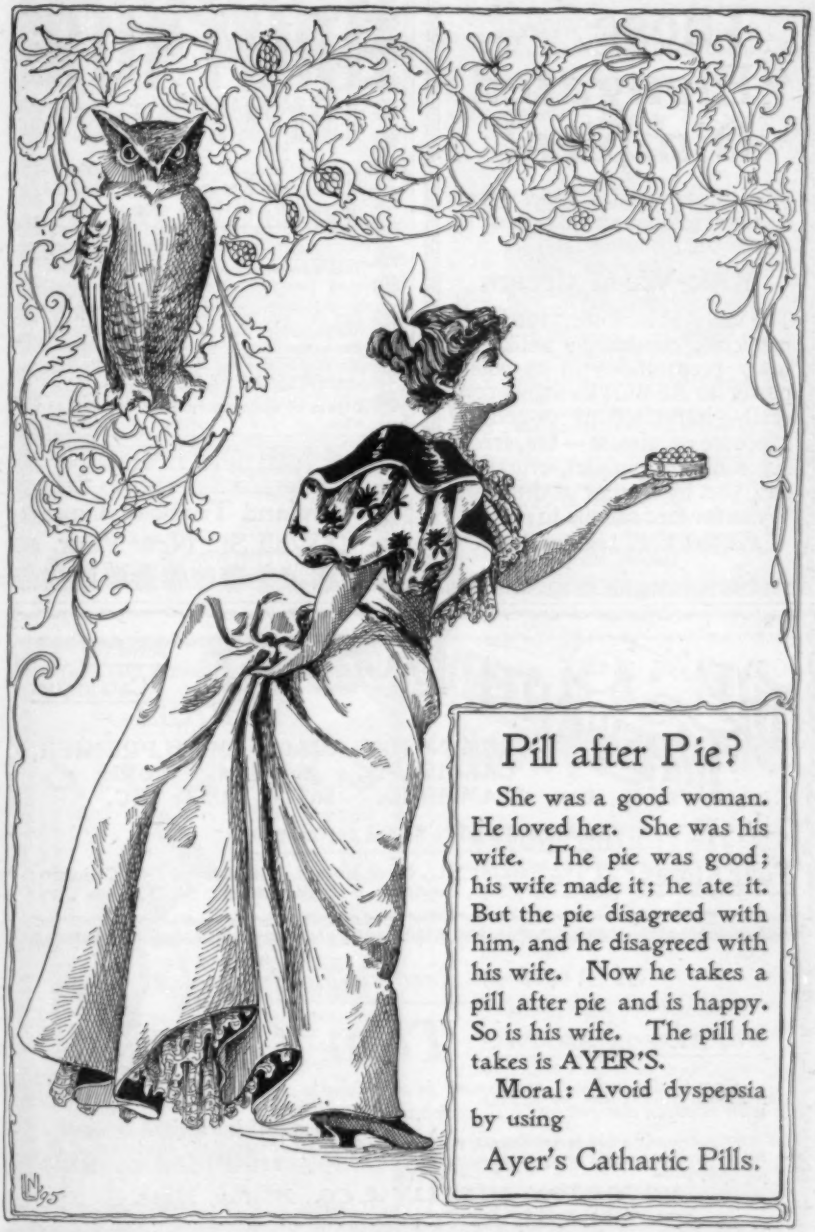
A Right Stomach

It brings to any man, woman, or child, strength, comfort, happiness, and new life.

Get of your druggist this great disease-conquering discovery (the price is $1 for the complete treatment, one bottle of Puritana, one bottle of Puritana Pills, and one bottle of Puritana Tablets, all in one package), and you will bless the day when you heard of Puritana. The Puritana Compound Co., Concord, N. H.



LAND AND SEA — EARTH AND SKY.



Pill after Pie?

She was a good woman. He loved her. She was his wife. The pie was good; his wife made it; he ate it. But the pie disagreed with him, and he disagreed with his wife. Now he takes a pill after pie and is happy. So is his wife. The pill he takes is AYER'S.

Moral: Avoid dyspepsia by using

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AND ITS CURE

TO THE EDITOR:—I have an absolute remedy for Consumption. By its timely use thousands of hopeless cases have been already permanently cured. So proof-positive am I of its power that I consider it my duty to *send two bottles free* to those of your readers who have Consumption, Throat, Bronchial or Lung Trouble, if they will write me their express and postoffice address. Sincerely,

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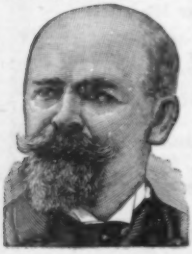

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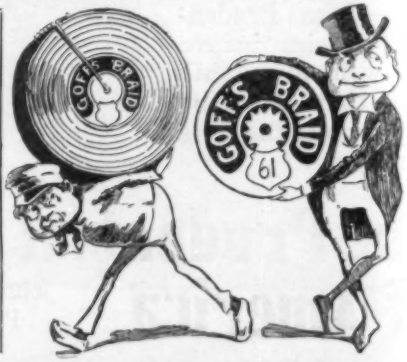

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"The Mysterious Card Unveiled!"

THE BLACK CAT for August, which will be issued July 16, will contain under the above title one of the most remarkable stories ever published. It is a sequel to "The Mysterious Card" by Cleveland Moffett, which appeared in THE BLACK CAT for February, and caused so profound a sensation throughout the country that 150,000 copies were sold in three days.

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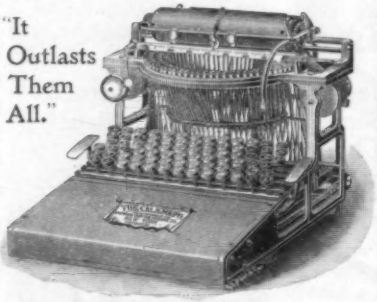

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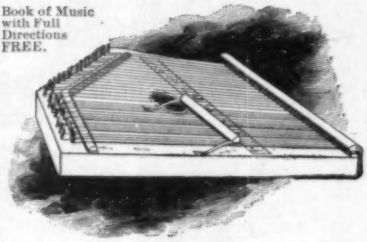

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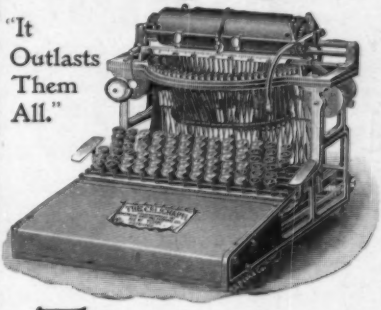

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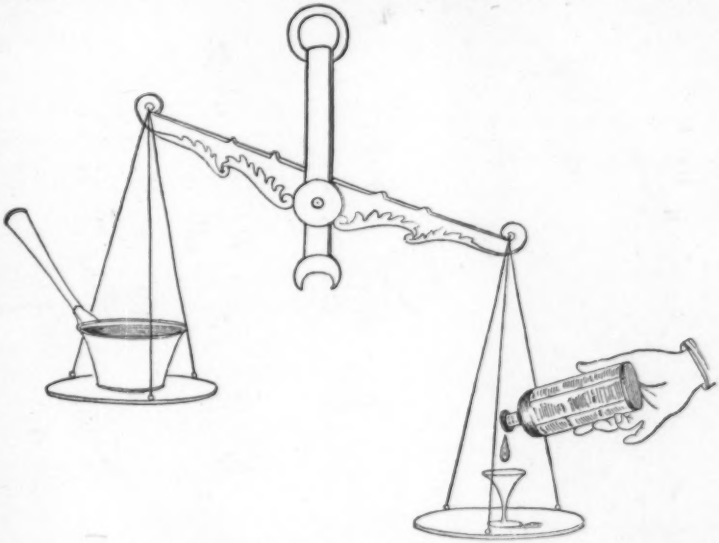

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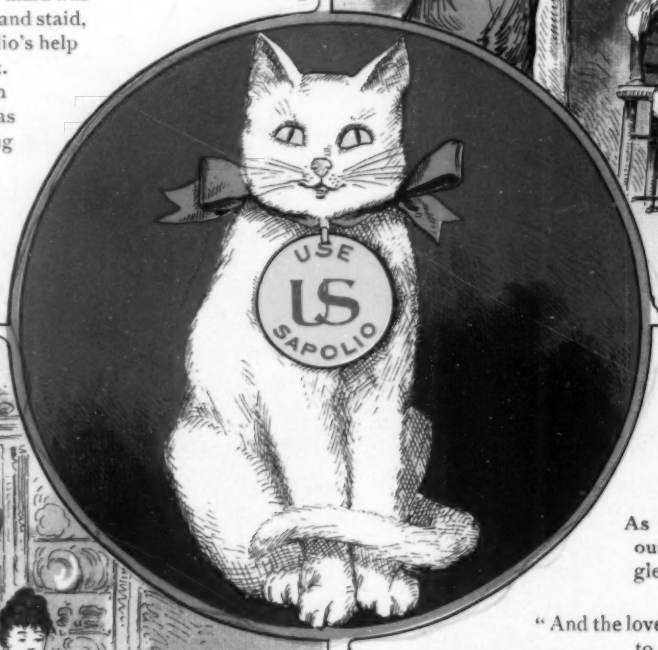
"Our former maid was
shrewd and staid,
For Sapolio's help
she took.
Her kitchen
bright was
a shining
light
For the
world to
come
and
look.



So bright
and gay,
her work
seemed
play,
As she sang
out in her
glee.

"And the lover that came
to change her
name,
Said: 'A long head 's the one for me.'"

Said the cat with a sigh:
"Though old things fly,
They 're the best, for all of that.
Though our maid is new, and pretty too,
She has n't the sense of a cat."

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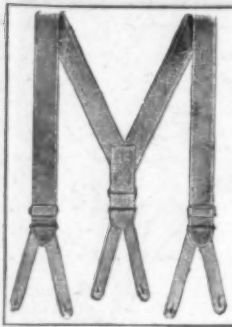

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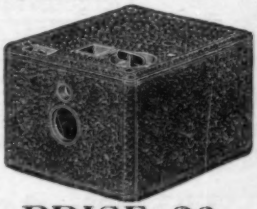

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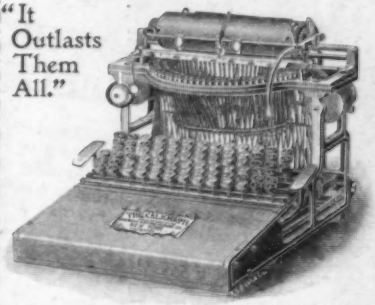

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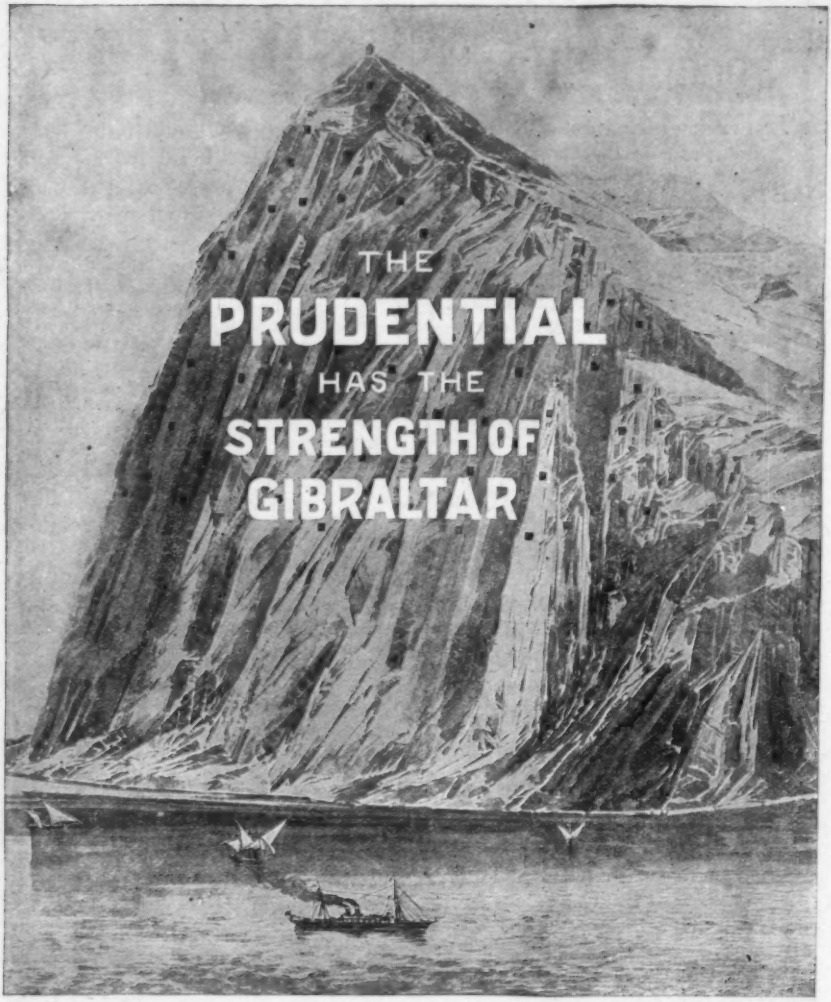

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Mrs. Hoyt, on account of the special weight that will be given to her words, is doing a public service through her statement, which is as follows:—

"To show the great change that has come into my life, I must describe my previous condition. I was completely run down, for my food did not assimilate, and, with plenty to eat on the table, I was unable to keep my body properly nourished. Yet I forced myself to eat in order to keep soul and body together, although I felt worse afterwards and paid for every morsel in suffering.

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If this account of my case induces other sufferers to take advantage of the Puritana treatment, I shall feel that it has not been given in vain."

Mrs. H. E. Hoyt

ROXBURY, MASS., May, 1896.

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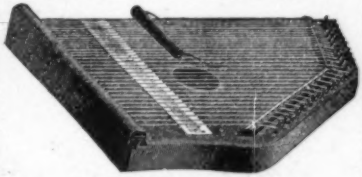

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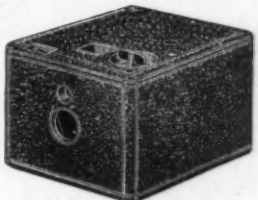

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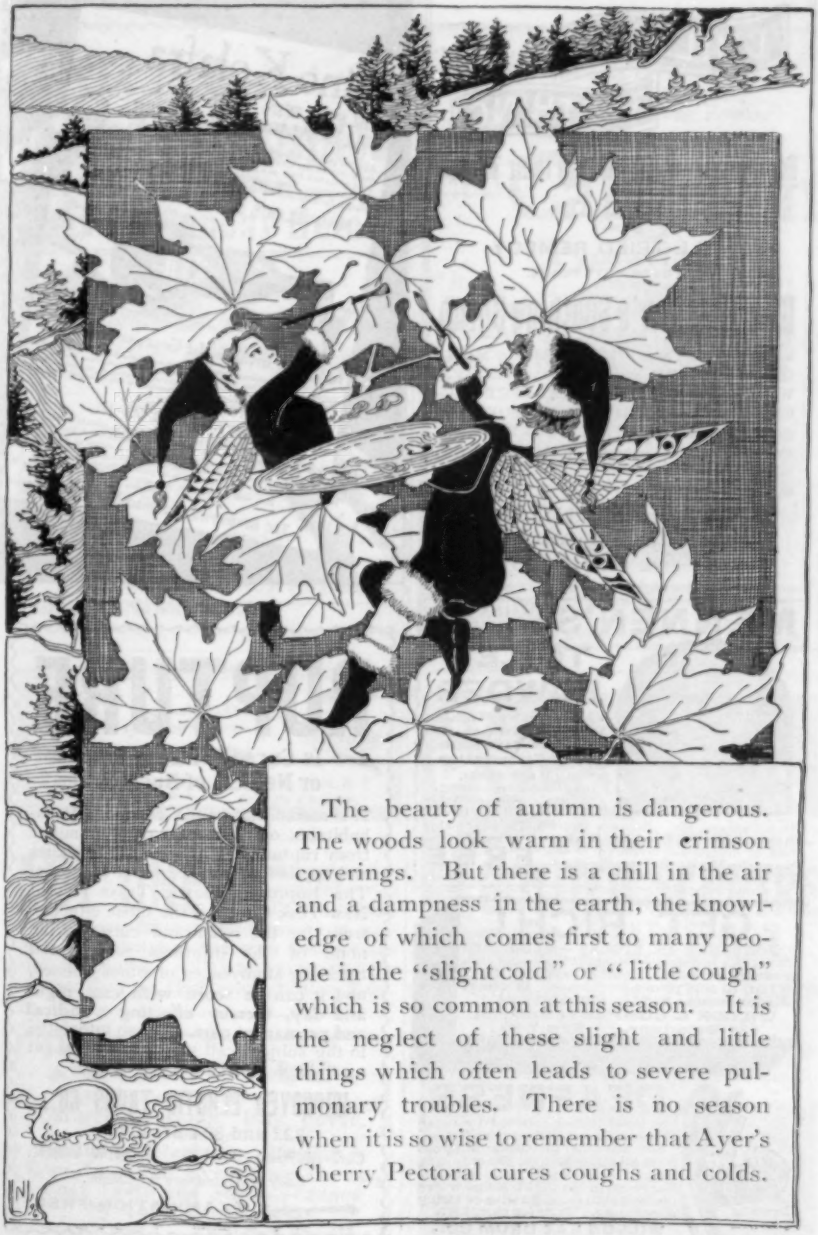

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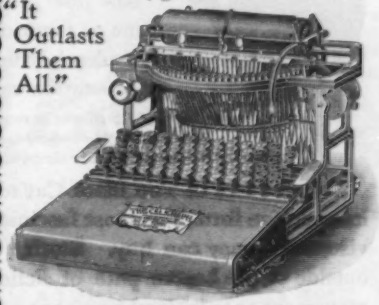

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Over $7,000 cash was paid for short stories published in The Black Cat during the first year of its existence—from October, 1895, to October, 1896.

For 50 cents the 12 numbers of The Black Cat, containing these stories, will be sent, postage paid, to any address in the U. S.

Not one penny of this $7,000 was paid for the name or fame of a writer. Every manuscript was judged solely upon its own merits, the writer's name or reputation carrying no weight whatever.

The publishers of The Black Cat recognize the fact that some of the poorest stories to be found in print are the "turned-out-to-order" efforts of famous authors, while many of the very best stories ever told are the creation of unknown writers.

It is the aim of The Black Cat to publish in clean, handy, attractive, inexpensive form, the most fascinating short stories that genius can devise and money can buy. Stories that both in plot and handling are outside of the beaten path of fiction. Stories so full of incident and movement as to interest every one. Stories that *are* stories,—not because of the reputation of their writers, but because of their own merits. Stories free from padding, foreign phrases, and "fine writing." Clean, clever, and copyrighted stories, that contain the kind of word painting that requires neither diagram to explain it nor pictures to sell it.

That a magazine conducted on these original, common-sense lines, is as pleasing to the lover of fascinating stories as it is profitable to the writer of fascinating stories is amply proved. The records of the American News Co. show that The Black Cat has, in less than a year, become one of the most widely circulated magazines in the world. The records of our dealings with contributors show that we have paid a higher price than was ever before paid by any publisher, where merit was the sole consideration. Here, for instance, are a few examples of what The Black Cat pays for stories: George W. Tripp, Auburn, N. Y., $125; Alice MacGowan, Chattanooga, Tenn., $76; Thomas F. Anderson, Boston, Mass., $100; A. Maurice Low, Washington, D. C., $110; Lillian Richardson, Plainfield, N. J., $70; R. Ottolengui, New York City, $160; James Buckham, Boston, Mass., $93; Eugene Shade Bisbee, Baltimore, Md., $140; Henrietta Kimball, Boston, Mass., $68; Geik Turner, Springfield, Mass., $100; Cleveland Moffett, New York City, $282; Mabell Shippie Clarke, Arden, N. C., $67.50; Rupert Hughes, New York City, $100; Edith M. Degen, Nashville, Tenn., $85; Leo Gale, New York City, $125; Bert L. Taylor, Providence, R. I., $200; Clarice I. Clinghan, New York City, $112.50; L. H. Rogers, Cleveland, Ohio, $125. These are by no means exceptional cases, nor are the prices named the highest we pay.

With a view to securing the very best short stories, the publishers of The Black Cat will offer a series of special prizes, including one of

$1,000 for a Short Story.

Full particulars of this offer will appear in the November issue of The Black Cat, and as competition for these special prizes is limited to yearly subscribers, all those who feel interested in this extraordinary opportunity should send in their subscriptions at once. The November Black Cat will, by the way, contain six better stories than were ever published in one issue of any magazine. THE SHORTSTORY PUBLISHING CO., Boston, Mass.

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(*From the Boston Globe.*)

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"I almost beggared myself trying to get relief from doctors. One after another they told me that I could not be cured. At the hospital where I had an operation performed for tumor, I had the same trouble from hemorrhages.

"The result of my experience was that I gave up doctoring, and when the blood would come in my mouth I would drink some witch hazel to stop it. My stomach was swollen so that I could only wear a wrapper, and my digestive organs were so irregular that none of the usual means of relief were of the least use.

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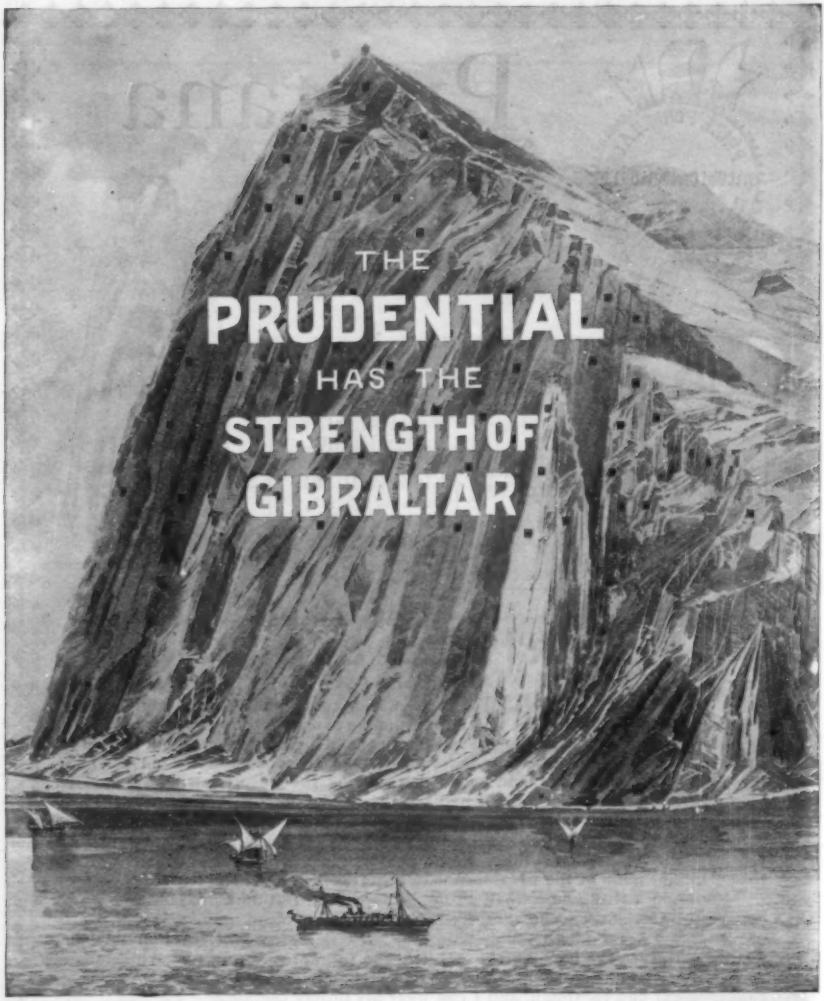

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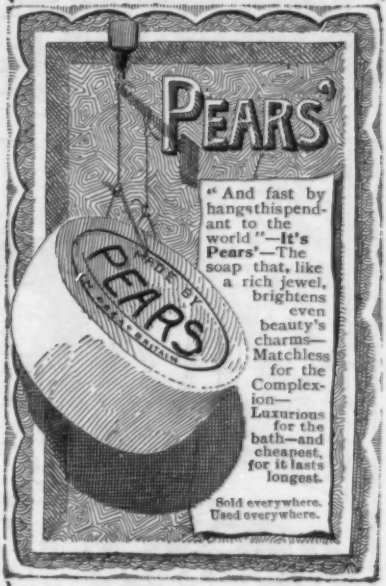
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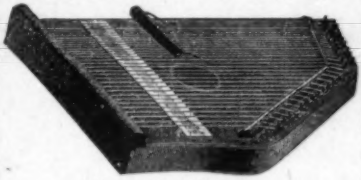

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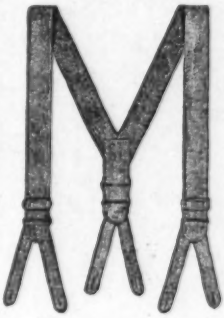

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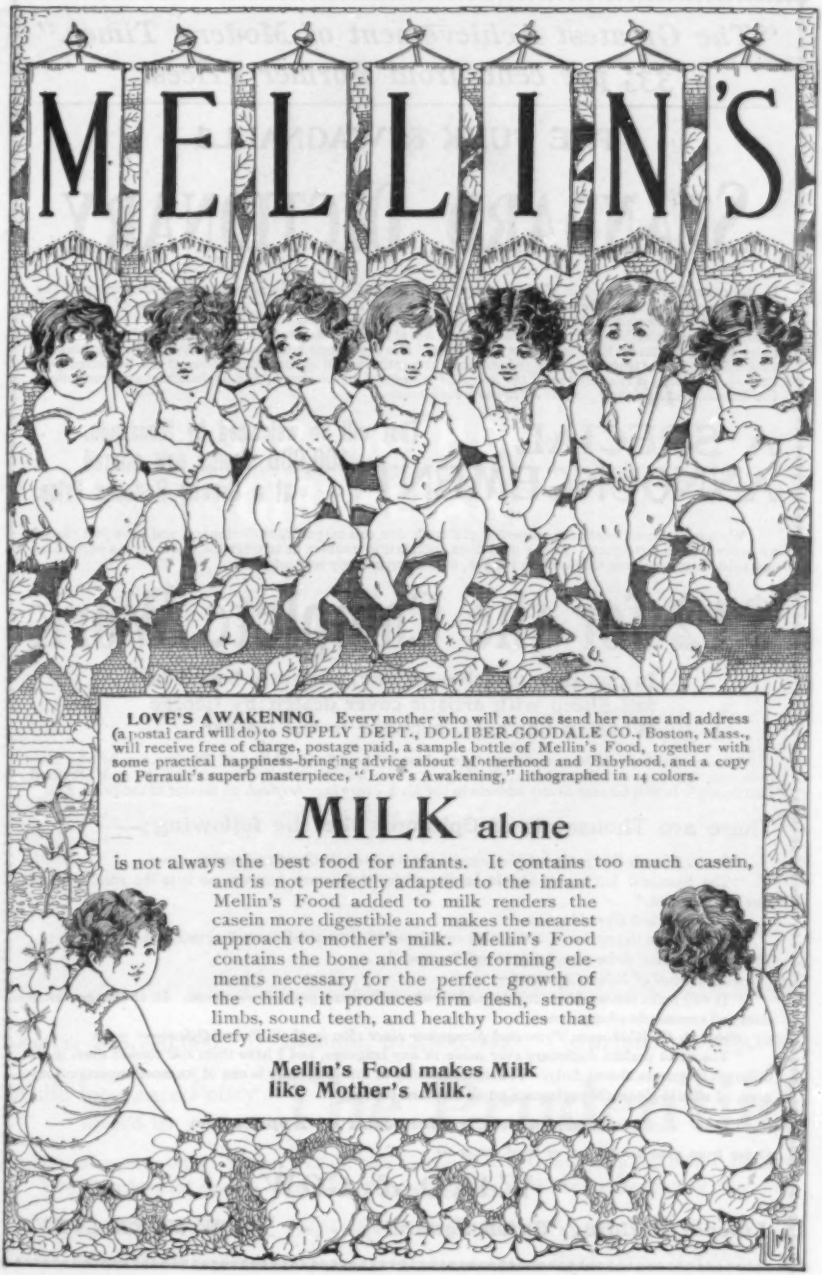
CONDITIONS: All manuscripts must bear the writer's full name and address, together with the number of words, which may range from 2,500 to 6,000, but must in no case exceed the latter number. They must be very legibly written, sent unrolled, postage fully prepaid, and accompanied by addressed and stamped envelopes for their return. All letters relating to same must be enclosed **with** MSS., and **not sent under separate cover.** Manuscripts will be received and returned only at the writer's risk. All stories will be judged purely on their own merits, and the writer's name or reputation will carry no weight whatever. With every manuscript intended for this special prize competition there must be enclosed **in the same envelope** one yearly subscription to THE BLACK CAT, together with fifty cents to pay therefor. All envelopes containing manuscripts and subscriptions as above must be plainly marked "For Competition," and their receipt will be promptly acknowledged. The competition will close March 31, 1897, after which awards will be announced in THE BLACK CAT, and paid in cash. All unsuccessful manuscripts will be returned. The conditions and requirements being here fully set forth, neither the publishers nor the editor can undertake to enter into correspondence relative thereto. All manuscripts must be addressed: **The Shortstory Publishing Co., For Competition, 144 High Street, Boston, Mass.**



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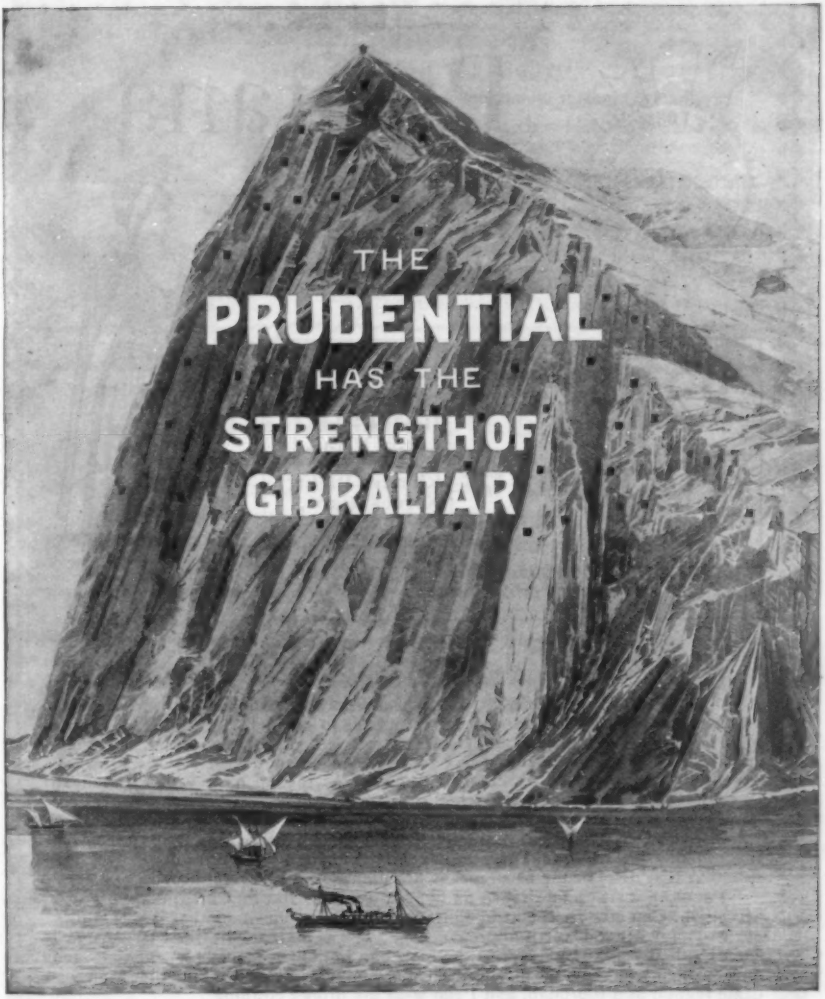

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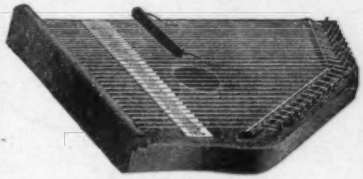

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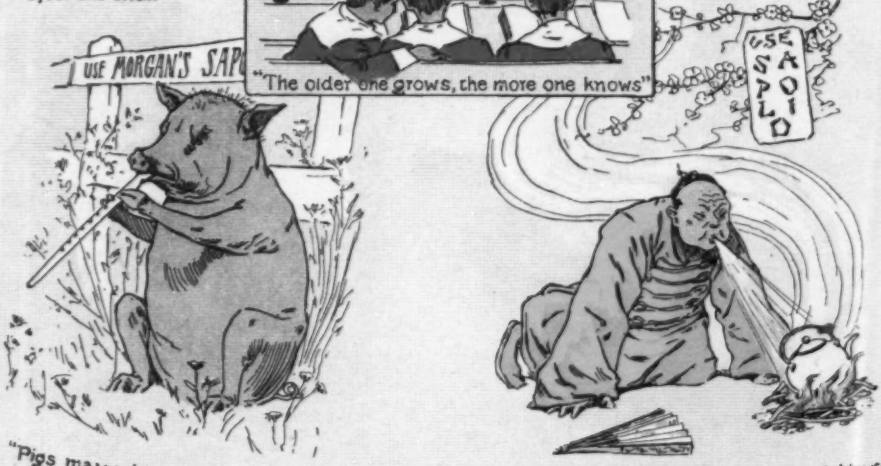

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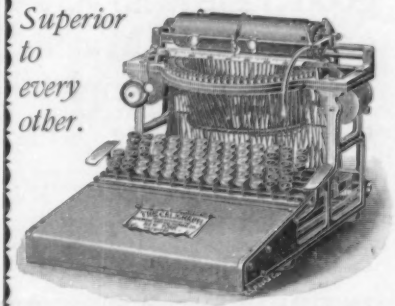

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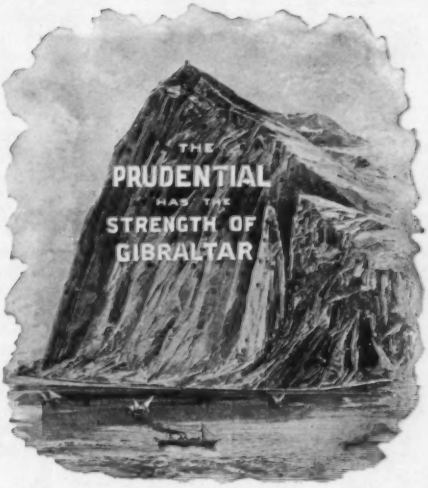

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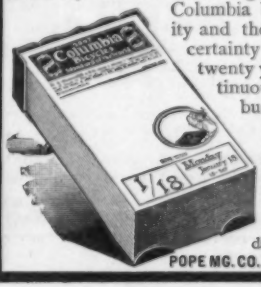

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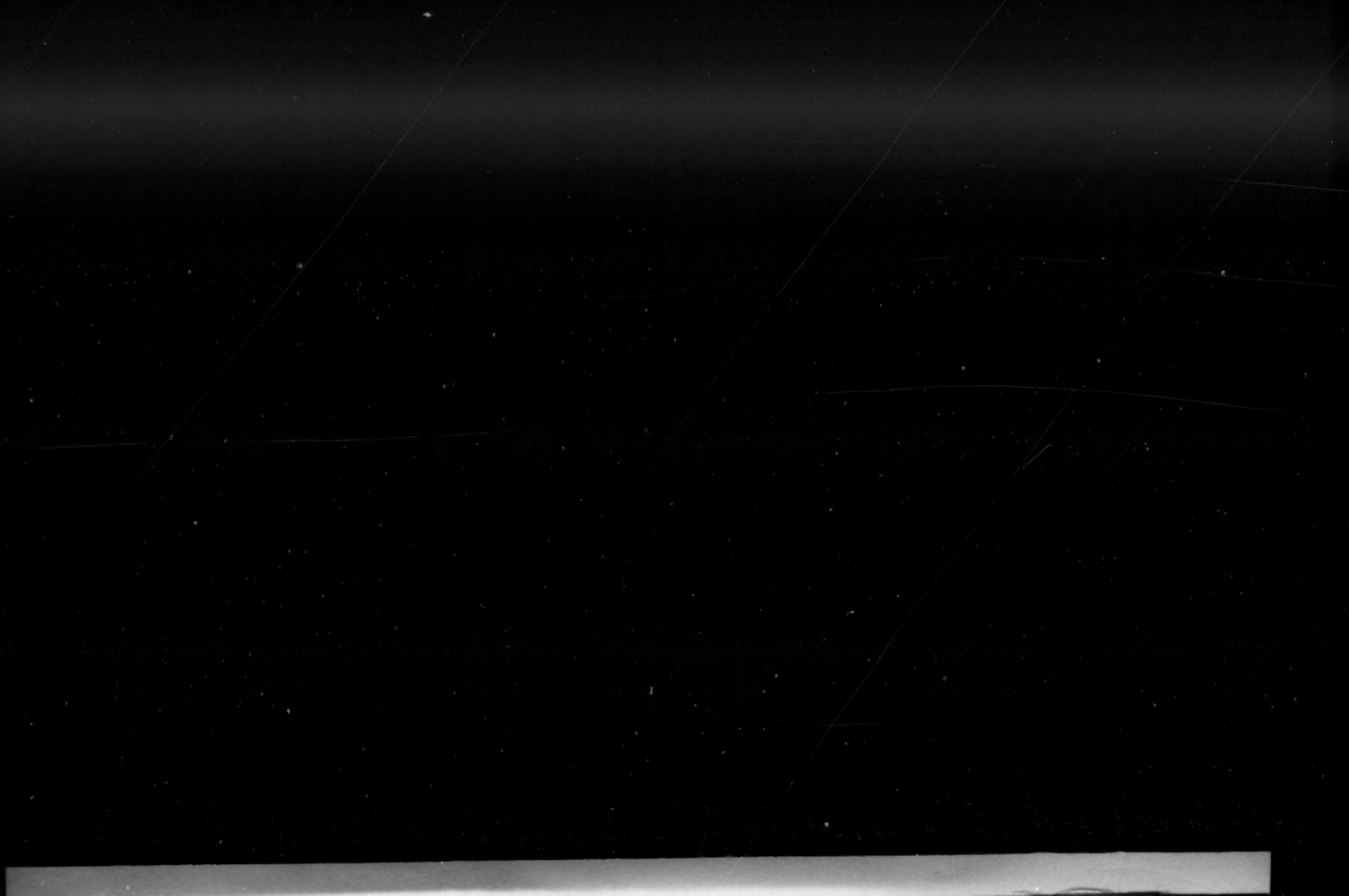
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